THE GARDEN OF EDEN

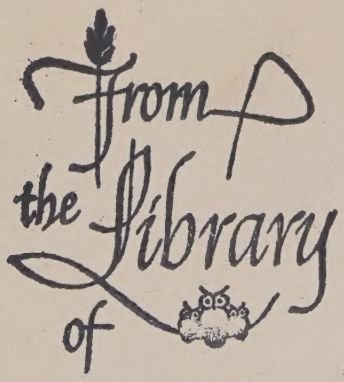
GEORGE HODGES

FOR REFERENCE USE ONLY
(Please do not remove from Library)

~~Dr. T. L. Lunard~~

Dr. T. L. Howard

FOR REFERENCE USE ONLY
(Please do not remove from Library)



CHARLES O. GINGERICH

By George Hodges

WHEN THE KING CAME. New *Illustrated Edition.* 12mo, $1.25.

WILLIAM PENN. In *Riverside Biographical Series.* With Photogravure Portrait. 12mo, 65 cents, *net;* postpaid, 71 cents. *School Edition,* with half-tone portrait, 50 cents, *net,* postpaid.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

UNITY LIBRARY & ARCHIVES
The garden of Eden : stories fr
CLOSED BS 551 .H6
0 0051 0019835 4

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

LOT CHOOSES THE PLEASANT LAND. (Page 12.)

FOR REFERENCE USE ONLY
(Please do not remove from Library)

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

STORIES FROM THE FIRST NINE BOOKS
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

BY

GEORGE HODGES

ILLUSTRATED BY
WALTER H. EVERETT

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1909

Unity School Library
Unity Village, MO 64065

COPYRIGHT, 1908 AND 1909, BY THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY

COPYRIGHT, 1909, BY GEORGE HODGES

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Published October 1909

TO

John Hodges

WHO LIKES THESE STORIES

CONTENTS

I.	The Garden of Eden	1
II.	Noah's Ark	6
III.	The Adventures of Lot	11
IV.	Isaac and Rebekah	17
V.	The Mess of Pottage	23
VI.	Jacob's Visit	29
VII.	The Coat of Many Colors	35
VIII.	The Seven Years of Famine	41
IX.	The Burning Bush	47
X.	The Ten Plagues	52
XI.	The Red Sea	57
XII.	The Golden Calf	62
XIII.	The Prophet and the King	67
XIV.	The Walls of Jericho	72
XV.	The Wedge of Gold	77
XVI.	The Relief of Gibeon	82
XVII.	The Battle of the Great Plain	86
XVIII.	The Altar of Baal	91
XIX.	The Battle of the Lamps and Pitchers	96
XX.	The Migration of Dan	101

CONTENTS

XXI.	The Riddle of the Lion and the Bees	106
XXII.	The Secret of Strength	111
XXIII.	The Bramble and the Fire	116
XXIV.	Jephthah's Daughter	121
XXV.	The King's Great-Grandmother	126
XXVI.	"Samuel! Samuel!"	131
XXVII.	The Battle of the Ark of God	136
XXVIII.	Five Gold Mice	141
XXIX.	Saul and the Seer	145
XXX.	The Battle of the Right Eyes	150
XXXI.	The Adventure of the Great Trembling	154
XXXII.	The Bleating of the Sheep	159
XXXIII.	A Shepherd of Bethlehem	164
XXXIV.	David fights the Giant	169
XXXV.	Under the King's Displeasure	174
XXXVI.	The Cave of Adullam	179
XXXVII.	The Outlaw and the Sheepmaster	184
XXXVIII.	The Adventure of the King's Spear	189
XXXIX.	In the Land of the Enemy	194
XL.	The Witch of Endor	199

ILLUSTRATIONS

Lot chooses the Pleasant Land (page 12)	*Colored frontispiece*
The Ark rests on the Top of a Mountain	8
The Blessing of the Second Son	26
There is the Dreamer	38
Moses by the Burning Bush	50
It sounds to Me like Singing	64
The Ass and the Angel	70
So They stoned Achan	80
Jael takes the Tent Pin	88
Gideon hears the telling of a Dream	98
Samson kills the Lion with his Hands	108
Boaz notices Ruth and asks about Her	128
The Lad shall belong to the Lord	132
They put the Ark upon a Cart, and the Mice beside It	142
Samuel and Saul have a Long Talk together	148
David escapes by the Window	174
David with the King's Spear	190

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

I

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

HIS is the oldest story in the world. It began to be told when children began to ask questions; and that was very long ago. The children said, "Where did everything come from? Who made the hills and the sea? Who made the sun and the stars?" And their fathers and mothers answered as best they could.

In our time, after long study of the earth, there are wise men who know more about these things than anybody knew when the world was young. They ask the earth itself, and tell us what the earth says. But the oldest story is still the best, because it tells us that the world was made by God. And that is what we want to know.

In the beginning of all beginnings, so the story goes, the world was a wide sea without a shore. Up and down, and here and there, and all across, nothing could be seen but water. And it was all dark, like the ocean at night when

there is no moon. And God said, "Let there be light!" And day appeared. And God made the sky; and under the sky, in the new light of day, in the midst of the vast waters, He made the land; and grass began to grow upon it, and then trees, with leaves and fruit.

Then in the sky, the sun began to shine by day, and the moon and stars by night. And in the sea, first little fishes and then big ones, began to swim; and in the air, the birds began to fly; and on the land, all kinds of living things began to move about, lions in the thick woods, sheep in the fields, cows in the pastures. And at last, as best of all, God made man; and to the first man He said, "Behold, the new earth and all that is in it. It is yours. Here you are to live, and over all these living things you are to rule."

Thus the world and man came into being. The story says that God did all this in six days, but the earth says that every one of these six days was millions of years long. Very, very slowly, but no less wonderfully, was the great world made.

"But," the children said, "if God, our Heavenly Father, made the world, how came there to be briers and brambles? Why is the ground so stony? and why do men have to work so hard to make things grow? and why have pain and sickness and sin and death come in to spoil the world?"

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

In the beginning of beginnings, said their fathers and mothers, — and this is the next oldest story, — the earth was a mighty plain, on which no rain had fallen since the first hour of time, but a mist blew in from the sea and watered the ground. Out of this damp earth, God made a man, body and legs and arms and head; and when the man was made, God breathed upon him, and, behold, the man lived. The body of earth was changed to flesh and blood, and the man opened his eyes, and rose up and began to walk and speak.

And God planted the Garden of Eden for the man to live in, with great shady trees, and a river singing as it flowed between its flowery banks. Then God brought to the man all the beasts and birds, and the man gave each a name, and they played together in the sunny fields.

But still the man was very lonely. Then God put the man to sleep, and while he slept God took out one of the man's ribs and of it made a woman. And the man waked and saw the woman, and he took her by the hand, and was very glad. The man's name was Adam, and the woman's name was Eve.

Now, God had showed Adam two trees of the Garden. One was a Tree of Life: whoever ate of the fruit of it would live forever. The other was a Tree of Knowledge: who-

ever ate of the fruit of it would know both good and evil. And God had said that these trees must not be touched. But one time, as Mother Eve was walking in the pleasant shadow of the Tree of Knowledge, she saw a serpent. This, you understand, was long ago, when strange things happened as they do in fairy stories. All the animals were friendly and knew how to talk. So Eve was not afraid, nor was she surprised to hear the serpent speak.

"Eve," he said, coiling his glittering tail about the tree, "this is good fruit; why do you never taste it?"

"Serpent," said Eve, "this is forbidden fruit. God has told us not to touch it."

"But see," replied the serpent, winking his bright eyes, "see how it shines among the leaves. Surely such fair fruit can do no harm. Indeed, a little taste will make you the wisest woman in the world!"

And foolish Eve listened and was tempted. She looked again at the bright and luscious fruit, and took of it and ate it, and gave to Adam and he ate it.

Then trouble came. That is what always follows disobedience. Adam and Eve began to consider what they had done, and they were sorry and afraid. Now, every day, in the Garden of Eden, God used to come, as the evening shadows lengthened, and walk among the trees in the cool

of the twilight; but that day, Adam and Eve hid themselves. So God called, "Adam, Eve, where are you? Why do you hide yourselves? Have you eaten of the fruit of the forbidden tree?"

And Adam came and said, "It was Eve's fault: she gave it to me." And Eve said, "It was the serpent's fault: he tempted me." As for the serpent, there was nobody else upon whom he could cast the blame.

So God said that the serpent and all serpents after him should crawl upon the ground. He sent Adam and Eve out of the garden, and, at the gate, to keep them from coming back, he set angels with flaming swords. Thus the good world was spoiled. Outside the garden gate, the earth was thick with briers and brambles.

II

NOAH'S ARK

AND then, what happened? After Adam and Eve had disobeyed God, and had been driven out of the Garden of Eden into the world of briers and brambles, then what happened? "Tell us," cried the children, "another story of the beginning of the world." And their fathers and mothers, in answer, told what their grandfathers and grandmothers had told them.

The first disobedience was like the first little flame which is touched to a heap of dry wood. It grew and grew. Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain became a farmer, and Abel became a shepherd. One time they brought each an offering to give to God. Cain brought fruit from his farm, and Abel brought lambs from his flock. But God looked at their hearts, and He was pleased with Abel's offering, but Cain's He would not take. And Cain was very angry with God and with his brother. Then one day when the two brothers were in the field together, Cain quarreled with Abel and struck him and killed him.

And God said, "Where is Abel thy brother?"

And Cain said, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Thus he sinned both in word and in deed; and God had to send him away into the wild deserts. All this was very terrible for Adam and Eve. Thus while briers and brambles grew in the ground, evil and sorrow grew in the hearts of men.

Now, after many years, the men and women and even the little children were all so bad that there was no way to make them better. The only thing to do was to destroy them, and begin the world all over again. But there was one good family. Noah and his wife, and their three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their wives, minded what God told them. So God said to Noah, "I will destroy all these wicked people, but I will save you and yours. I will wash the whole earth clean with a great flood. You must make a boat, and you and your wife, and your sons and their wives must get into it. And you must take all the animals with you, two of every kind, with which to start the world again after the flood is over."

Noah began, therefore, to build a boat. In the middle of a wide field, he and his sons brought beams and boards together and set to work. The boat was like a box, and it was called the Ark, because that means a box. It had a big door in the side, and all around, near the top, ran a

line of windows. And inside all the cracks were filled with pitch, to keep the water out.

Before long, the neighbors came, and said, "What are you doing, Noah?"

And Noah answered, "I am building a boat."

"But," said the neighbors, "this is no place for a boat. A boat is of no use without water. Who ever heard of a boat in the middle of a meadow?"

But Noah said, "Here, where we stand, in this dry field, the water shall be as deep as the highest hills are high." Then Noah told them of the coming flood, and tried to get them to stop their bad ways, that they might live, and not be drowned. But the neighbors only laughed at Noah, and said he must be crazy to build a boat on dry land, and so they went back to their wicked lives. Sometimes, when it rained, they thought of Noah, but the rain cleared away, and they laughed again, and were worse than ever.

At last, the great day came, with clouds and thunder. Early that morning, the animals began to come from near and far, lions and bears, and sheep and oxen, camels and elephants, and cats and dogs, two by two they jumped and crawled and ran and flew into the Ark. When they were all in, Noah and his wife, and Shem, Ham, and Japheth and

THE ARK RESTS ON THE TOP OF A MOUNTAIN

their wives went in after them, and the door was shut. And when the door was shut, the rain came.

First, it rained as if a little brook were tumbling down out of the sky, and then the brook changed into a river, and the river into a pond, and the pond into a lake, and the lake into an ocean, and all the air was full of water as the sea is full of waves. The water filled the streets of towns, and crept into the doors of houses, and climbed step after step upstairs, till all the roofs were covered. By and by, nothing was to be seen in all the earth but the Ark floating on the flood. And when Noah looked out of the window of the Ark, the world appeared as it did in the beginning of beginnings, a wide waste of water. And still it rained, and rained.

At last, after days and days, nobody knows how long, the rain ceased, and the sun came out, and the flood began to go down. And one day, there was a grinding noise as if the Ark had touched the ground, and Noah looked, and, behold, the Ark had landed on the top of a mountain, which was like a little island in the deep sea. By and by, Noah sent out a dove, and the dove flew here and there and found no rest for the sole of her foot, and so came back. And again, after a week, Noah sent the dove a second time, and now she brought back a leaf plucked from an olive

tree. Thus Noah knew that the water had gone down below the treetops. Once more he sent the dove, and this time she found a place to make a nest.

Then Noah opened the wide door of the Ark, and all the world was green and fresh and shining in the sun. And there on the top of the mountain, which is called Ararat, Noah and his family thanked God for their deliverance, and all the beasts and birds, each in his own way, said Amen. And across the sky was a gleaming rainbow, from one hill to another over the glistening earth. And God said to Noah, "Behold the bow! It is the sign of my promise that I will never again destroy the earth. When the rain falls and men begin to be afraid, then shall the sun shine through the wet clouds, and the bow shall be painted in the sky." Thus, with the prayers of Noah and with the promise of God, the life of man began anew.

III

THE ADVENTURES OF LOT

ONCE upon a time, when the world was still young, there was a lad named Lot. His father and mother were dead, and he lived with his Uncle Abraham and his Aunt Sarah.

In the place where Lot lived, the people believed that the moon was God. They looked up into the sky at night, and saw the shining moon, and it seemed to them the most beautiful and most wonderful sight in the world, and they said their prayers to it. But Abraham knew better than that. He knew that God who made the earth made the moon also. Because Abraham would not go to the moon-church, his neighbors disliked him. So at last he made up his mind to move away. One night, in a dream, he heard the voice of God, and God told him to go. And, the next day, he took Sarah and Lot, and started out to find a better place to live in. Thus Lot got his first look at the wide world.

Abraham and Sarah and Lot rode on the backs of camels, but they had to go very slowly because they took with them

all their sheep and cows. So they journeyed and they journeyed till by and by they came to a great river, called the Euphrates. And then they journeyed and they journeyed till by and by they came to another river, called the Jordan, in a deep valley. And there, between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea,— the place is on the map,— they found a pleasant land which they liked much. On account of their flocks and herds they could not settle down and stay long in one place, so they wandered here and there over the green country, stopping to rest now under a spreading oak, and now in the shadow of a great rock; and they slept in tents.

But, after a while, they had so many sheep and lambs, and cows and calves, that it was hard to find a pasture big enough to feed them all. When they came to a spring of water, and all wanted to drink at the same time, there was great confusion; and sometimes the herdsmen fought about it. So one day Abraham said to Lot, "There are now so many cattle that we had better divide them into two companies, and pasture them in different places. You take yours and go your way, and I will take mine and go my way. Here is a high hill, from which we may see all the land. Let us climb up and look, and you shall choose which part you will take." So they climbed up the hill,

and looked out over the land. To the north were rocky hills, to the south were wild deserts, to the west was the sea, but to the east was a green plain. In the plain were rich pastures, and groves of trees with the white houses of little towns among them, and a river flowing by, so that it looked like the Garden of Eden. This pleased Lot. He said to himself, "My Uncle Abraham has given me my choice, and I will choose the best there is." So he chose the plain, leaving Abraham the stony hills.

Now, people who think only of themselves, and take the best without regard to others, sometimes get the worst. And this is very likely to be the case with those who choose that which is easy instead of that which is hard. So it was with Lot. The plain was not so pleasant as he thought. It had once been the bed of a salt sea, and in some places the salt lay upon the ground, and there were salt springs. And near by there was a dreadful swamp where the mud was mixed with oil. Before Lot had been long at Sodom, — for this was the name of the town in which he lived, — there came four kings with long names and fierce soldiers, and they drove the people out of their houses, and back into the swamp, and they captured them and carried them away. Abraham, when he heard of it, took all his herdsmen, and armed them with swords and clubs, and they

attacked the four kings by night when they were asleep, and rescued Lot and his neighbors. But it was all very unpleasant for Lot.

The people of Sodom had never been good people, but after this they were worse than ever. It troubled Lot greatly. Sometimes he thought of moving away, but his wife liked the place, and so did their two daughters: so he stayed. He reproved his bad neighbors, but that did no good; he only made himself unpopular.

At last, one hot day, as Abraham sat in the door of his tent under the shade of the oaks, he saw three men coming. And he rose up and ran to meet them, for he was very kind to strangers. "Come," he said, "and rest here in the cool shade, and my wife shall get you something to eat." So the strangers stopped, and Sarah made a fire and baked some cakes and broiled some meat, and brought out curds and whey, and set the table. And after supper, the men looked towards Sodom, and one of them said, "What kind of a place is that? We hear sad things about it." And Abraham said, "I have a nephew who lives there, and he tells me that it is a very wicked place indeed." And the men said, "We are going to see with our own eyes and hear with our own ears." So they went on down the road to Sodom.

Now, when they came to the town, there was Lot sitting by the gate, and he was glad to see them, and took them to his house and was very nice to them. But that night, when Lot's neighbors found that he had company, they came about the house, a great crowd of them, hooting and throwing stones, and tried to break in the door to kill them. So the strangers saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears.

Then, early in the morning before the sun was up, the visitors wakened Lot. "Come," they cried, "get up and escape out of this place, for this very day it shall be destroyed." And the visitors hurried them, pointing to the sky, and crying that the storm was coming and the time was short. "Quick!" they said; "run for your lives! Do not even look back. Go to the mountain." And as they came out of the house, the sky was of the color of copper and of iron, and a fearful wind began to blow, and the lightning flashed and the thunder roared. And, as they came out of the town, the earth quaked, and the springs of salt and of oil were broken, and salt and oil and pitch burst up into the air in the great swamp, and the lightning set them on fire, and the wind blew them on the town.

So Lot ran and his daughters ran, and at first his wife ran with them. But Lot's wife was very fond of Sodom.

Bad as it was, she liked it. She could not bear to leave it. She stopped and looked back, only for a moment, but in that moment the storm of fire and brimstone overtook her. There she fell, and the drifting sand and whirling salt of the tempest buried her.

The next day, as soon as it was light, Abraham arose and looked toward Sodom, and all the sky was black with smoke. As for Lot's wife, nothing was left of her but a pillar of salt.

IV

ISAAC AND REBEKAH

BRAHAM had a son named Isaac. One time, when Isaac was but a little lad, he had a strange adventure in which he very nearly lost his life.

The people of that land believed that God wishes us to give Him the very best we have. And that is right, if we give Him our best by using it so as to please Him. But they said that the thing to do with our best is to burn it. So they would make a heap of stones, and put wood upon it, and place their best on the wood, and set fire to it, and the flame and smoke would rise into the sky. That was called a sacrifice. When they were very glad and wished to thank God, and when they were in great trouble and desired God to help them, they offered a sacrifice.

Now there was nothing in the world for which Abraham and Sarah cared so much as they did for their little boy Isaac. He was their very best. And so it came into Abraham's heart that there was no way by which he could so plainly show God the greatness of his faith and love as to give Him Isaac. And early one morning Abraham wak-

ened Isaac, and said, "We are going on a long journey to-day, my son." And Isaac was glad, because he loved to go on journeys with his father.

So off they went, along the green road, and Isaac was very happy, but Abraham was very sad, and Sarah in her tent was crying as if her heart would break. At last they came to a hill, and Abraham cut a bundle of wood, and let Isaac carry it on his back; but Abraham carried a knife. Now Isaac had often seen the sacrifice of lambs, so as they climbed the hill he said, "Father, here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb?"

And Abraham answered, "God will provide himself a lamb."

But at the top of the hill, when the wood was piled upon the ground, Abraham with tears in his eyes took Isaac and tied his hands and his feet, and laid him on the wood.

Then suddenly there came a quick voice in Abraham's heart, and the voice called, "Abraham! Abraham!" And Abraham said, "Here am I." And the voice said, "Do not touch the lad. Behind you in the thicket is a ram. Take that." So Abraham untied his little boy, and kissed him, and sacrificed the ram. Thus he showed how much he was willing to do for God, but Isaac was spared. And God taught Abraham that He does not wish for such a sacrifice

as that. The best thing to do with little boys is to love them, and teach them, and bring them up to be obedient and useful.

So Isaac grew to be a fine young man, and his father thought that it was high time for him to be getting married. In their country the fathers and mothers attended to all that, but Isaac's mother was now dead, so Abraham had to manage by himself. One day he sent for his steward, Eliezer, who attended to his most important business, and said, "Eliezer, I want you to go back to the old country, and find a wife for Isaac. Go to the place where I was brought up, and where my folks still live, and find a girl who will make him a good wife."

So Eliezer took ten camels and a bag of presents of gold and silver, and away he went, across the Jordan and across the Euphrates. One day as the sun was setting he came to a well of water beside a little town. Women were coming out with pitchers on their shoulders to draw water. The well was a deep pool, with a cold spring at the bottom of it. There were stone steps leading down, and at the top of the steps was a trough for camels. There Eliezer made his camels kneel down, as camels do, and he said to himself, "I will wait till I see a girl whose looks I like, and I will ask her for a drink, and if she says, 'Yes, and I will give

your camels drink also,' then I will tell her about Isaac." So he stood and waited, and one came and another came. At last came a maiden named Rebekah, who was very fair to look upon. And Eliezer said, "Will you let me drink a little water from your pitcher?" "Yes," she said, "and I will give your camels drink also." Then Eliezer was very glad, and in his heart he thanked God, and out of his bag he took two bracelets of gold, one for each of the girl's arms. And he said, "Whose daughter are you? Is there room in your father's house for us to lodge?"

She answered, "My father's name is Bethuel, and my grandfather's name is Nahor."

"What," said Eliezer, "Nahor the brother of Abraham?"

"Yes," said Rebekah, "and we have plenty of room for you and your men and your ten camels."

So she ran home before him and showed her mother the bracelets, and her brother Laban ran out to meet the man, and brought him into the house; and supper was ready, and they asked him to sit down. But Eliezer said, "I must not eat till I have told my errand." So they listened as he spoke of Abraham and Isaac and Rebekah.

"Now," he said, "what will you do? Will you give Rebekah to be Isaac's wife?"

And Rebekah's mother and her brother said, "This is the Lord's doing. Take Rebekah, and let her be the wife of Isaac."

Then Eliezer opened his treasures and took out jewels of gold and jewels of silver, and beautiful embroidered things to wear, and gave them to Rebekah and her mother. After that he sat down at the table, and they all had supper, and were very happy.

The next day, Eliezer said, "Let me go back now, with Rebekah, to my master." But they urged him to stay. "Oh, let Rebekah wait," they said, "a little while till we can get her ready. In a week or ten days, she may go." But he said, "We ought to go at once."

And they called Rebekah and said, "How shall it be? Will you go with this man to-day?" She said, "I will go." So they bade her good-by, with many prayers and blessings, and sent her maids along to wait upon her; and her old nurse, Deborah, went with her.

Thus they rode away on camels, and they journeyed and they journeyed, till one day they saw in the distance a man walking in the fields, and he was coming to meet them. And Rebekah said, "Who is this man walking across the fields to meet us?" And Eliezer replied, "That is my young master, Isaac." So Rebekah took a veil and

covered herself, for that was the custom of the country. And Isaac brought her into his mother's tent, and she became his wife. And he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

V

THE MESS OF POTTAGE

SAAC and Rebekah had two sons. The elder was a red-headed lad, called Esau. The younger was named Jacob. The two boys were quite different. Esau was very fond of hunting. He loved to get away into the deep woods and to climb the steep hills. For days at a time he would roam about, with his bow and arrows, and when he came home he always had something in his hand, some bird or beast which he had shot. Sometimes he brought back a deer, and he knew how to cook the venison just as his father liked it. And this pleased Isaac. Jacob was a home boy, who preferred to stay about the house. He worked in the garden, and took care of the sheep and cows, and helped his mother. And that pleased Rebekah. So Isaac's favorite son was Esau, and Rebekah's favorite son was Jacob. But Esau, being the elder, had the birthright. That is, he was the one to be the head of the family after the death of his father.

But one day, Esau came home from hunting, very tired and hungry. And he found Jacob cooking something over

the fire. The fire was blazing, and the kettle was boiling away at a great rate, and the most appetizing ódors were coming out of it, and in the kettle was a mess of pottage, which was made of lentils, and was something like peas, and something like beans, and something like chicken broth, and very nice to eat.

So Esau said, "Give me some of your pottage."

But Jacob said, "I will sell it to you. Give me your birthright, and I will give you my pottage."

Then Esau said to himself, "What is the good of my birthright when I am hungry! I can't eat it. I can't even see it. I will not have it for years and years. But here is the pottage now." And he said, " It is a bargain. Give me the pottage." Then Jacob emptied the kettle into the dish, and hungry Esau, thinking no more of the birthright, sat down and ate the hot pottage with a big spoon.

Then years passed and years passed, and their father Isaac became an old man. His eyes were dim, and he could not see, and he felt that his life was coming to an end. So, one morning, he called Esau and said, " Esau, I wish you would take your bow and arrows, and go out and kill a deer. I think that a taste of your venison will make me strong. And I want to be strong to-day, because I intend to give you my blessing."

So Esau took his bow and arrows, and away he went to find a deer.

But Rebekah had heard what Isaac said to Esau, and when Esau, with his red head, had disappeared among the trees, she called Jacob. "Jacob," she said, "your father is not feeling so well to-day. He thinks that he is about to die, and he means to give Esau the blessing of the birthright. Now you go out into the pasture and bring me two little goats, and kill them, and I will cook the meat of the goats so that your father will think it is the sweetest venison he ever ate, and he will give you the blessing which he has for Esau."

But Jacob said, "Father will know at once that I am not Esau, for Esau's hands are covered with hair, but mine are smooth. He will find me out, and be very angry with me."

And Rebekah answered, "I will manage that, my son."

Then Jacob went out into the pastures, and killed two kids of the goats, and his mother cooked the meat so that it tasted like the sweetest venison. And she dressed Jacob in Esau's best clothes, and on his neck and arms and hands she put some of the skin of the goats, and she gave him the meat and bread, and in he went to feed his father.

Now Isaac was so old and sick that he lay in bed. So

Jacob came into his room, and said, "Sit up, father, and taste the nice venison which I have brought you."

And Isaac said, "How have you come so soon, my son?"

And Jacob answered, "God showed me a deer in the first field, and I killed it with the first arrow."

But Isaac was not satisfied. He sat up in bed and said, "Come near, my son, and let me feel you, that I may know whether you are truly my son Esau or not." And Jacob went near and his father felt him, and the clothes were Esau's clothes and his hands and neck were rough and hairy like Esau's. And Isaac said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau."

And he asked again, "Are you my son Esau?"

And Jacob lied again, and said, "I am."

And Isaac said, "Bring me, then, the meat that I may eat it." And when he had eaten he said, "Come near now and kiss me, my son." And Jacob kissed him. And Isaac gave Jacob his best blessing, the blessing of the birthright. And Jacob went away.

Now Jacob had hardly gone out of the room, when Esau came. "Here I am, father," he cried, "back from the hunting, and here is the meat which I have cooked just as you always like it. Come, eat it, and bless me."

And Isaac said, "Who are you?"

THE BLESSING OF THE SECOND SON

And he answered, "I am your son, your eldest son, Esau."

And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, "Who came, then, in your place? Who brought venison and I ate it, and gave him your blessing?"

Then Esau cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!"

And Isaac said, "It was your brother, Jacob. He lied to me, and stole your blessing. But I have blessed him, and I cannot change it. I have made him the head of the family after my death."

And Esau said to his father, "Have you but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father!" And Esau cried aloud. Then Isaac blessed Esau also, but he could not give him so good a blessing as he had given Jacob.

Now Rebekah had been thinking for a good while that it would be well for Jacob to visit his cousins, who lived in the old country, beyond the rivers. For there was a family in the neighborhood named Heth, whom Isaac and Rebekah did not like, and they had a number of daughters, and Jacob used to go to see them. It troubled Rebekah greatly, and more than once she had said to Isaac, "Those Heth girls worry me almost to death. How dreadful it would be if Jacob should marry one of them!" And Isaac

had said, "Let him go and see his cousins. A change will do him good." So now, when Jacob's behavior had displeased his father and made his brother so angry with him that he threatened to kill him, Rebekah felt that the time had come. She packed up Jacob's things, and sent him off for a long visit at his Uncle Laban's.

VI

JACOB'S VISIT

O Jacob mounted a camel, and away he went. And when the sun began to set, he looked about him, and he was in a wild country where nobody lived, and where the only roof in sight was the round roof of the sky. So he lay down on the hard ground and put a smooth stone under his head for a pillow, and went to sleep, for he was tired. And in the night he dreamed a dream.

He thought that the night sky was all bright above him, and that there was a ladder of light reaching from earth to heaven, and that there were angels climbing up and climbing down, and that at the top of the ladder was God himself, who said, "Jacob, this land on which you sleep shall some time belong to you and to your children, and your family shall grow into a great nation and be a blessing to the world." Then all was dark again, till the morning sun shone upon the sleeper.

That morning, after Jacob had said his prayers, he took the stone which he had used for a pillow, and a lot of other stones, and piled them up to mark the place. And he asked

God to protect him from all the dangers of the way and to bring him home again in peace; and he promised that he would try to please God. For, in spite of the mean things that he had done, there was a great deal of good in Jacob.

So he journeyed and he journeyed, and by and by he came to the river Jordan, and his camel carried him over, wading across a shallow place. And then he journeyed, and he journeyed, and he journeyed, till by and by he came to the river Euphrates, and even over this wide river did his camel carry him, finding a shallow place and wading across. And one day about noon he came to a well in a field, and three flocks of sheep were lying by it, but the mouth of the well was covered with a great stone.

And Jacob spoke to the shepherds and said, "Brothers, where do you live?"

And they said, "We live in Haran." And that was the very place for which Jacob was looking.

And Jacob said, "Do you know anybody there named Laban?"

"Yes," they said, "we know him."

"Is he well?"

"Yes, he is very well, and there at this moment comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."

And Jacob looked, and across the field, leading a flock of sheep, came his Cousin Rachel. And Jacob rolled away the stone from the well's mouth, and drew water for Rachel's sheep. And he said, "I am your Cousin Jacob, the son of your Uncle Isaac and your Aunt Rebekah, and I have come to make you a long visit." And there were tears in his eyes, because he was so glad to be at the end of his journey. And he kissed Rachel. And Rachel left the sheep, and ran and told her father that Jacob had come. And when Laban heard that, he ran out to meet Jacob and he embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house.

The next day, Jacob began to help in the work of the farm. He milked the cows and watered the cattle, and made himself generally useful; but the work which he liked best was the tending of the sheep. Every day, whether there was rain or shine, he went out into the pastures and helped Rachel keep the sheep. And this he did partly because he liked sheep, but still more because he liked Rachel. So a month passed, and one day his Uncle Laban said, "Jacob, I don't think that you ought to work without any pay just because you are my nephew. Stay with me and let me give you wages, like the other men. What shall I give you?"

And Jacob said, "Uncle Laban, I would like very much to have your daughter Rachel."

And Laban said, "Jacob, I would rather have her marry you than any other man I know." And Rachel felt just the same way. So it was settled that Jacob should work for Laban seven years, and then should marry Rachel. So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days for the love he had to her.

Now this, you understand, was a long time ago, and far away in Asia, beyond the Euphrates. And they had a strange custom of marrying two wives, or three, and sometimes more. So when the seven years were over, Laban told Jacob that if he wished to marry Rachel, he must first marry her older sister Leah. "In our country," he said, "we must not give the younger before the older." So Jacob had to marry Leah, who was a good girl but very near-sighted, and serve seven more years for Rachel. This was pretty hard for both Rachel and Jacob, but he did it, and when the seven added years were passed they were married with great joy.

Then Jacob felt that it was time for him to go home, for he had gone to his Uncle Laban's to spend a month and had stayed fourteen years. All this time his flocks and herds had grown in number. For Laban gave him sheep and

goats, in payment for his work. But when Laban said, "This year you shall have for your wages all the brown sheep and all the speckled goats," behold, that year almost all of the goats were speckled and almost all of the sheep were brown. So Jacob got to be very rich. He had sheep and goats, and cows and camels, and men-servants and maid-servants. But Jacob was so useful to Laban that Laban was not willing to let him go.

Finally, one day, when Laban was away off shearing sheep, Jacob and Rachel and Leah gathered all their belongings together, and all their cattle, and started for Jacob's home without saying good-by. Off they went, over the river. And though Laban followed and begged them to come back, they would not go. Then they journeyed and they journeyed, till at last Jacob saw in the distance the hills of his own land.

Then Jacob began to remember Esau and how he had threatened to kill him. And he sent messengers to Esau to tell him that he was coming back, and to find how Esau felt. And the messengers returned and said, "Esau is coming to meet you with four hundred men." And Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.

And that night he had a dream. He dreamed that he was wrestling with a man; he was trying to throw the man, and

the man was trying to throw him; and neither could master the other. At last, as the sun rose, Jacob found that the man was an angel, and the angel said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." And Jacob said, "I will not let you go until you bless me." So the angel blessed Jacob, and he awoke. And there across the wide field was his brother Esau. And Jacob stood up and bowed down before his brother seven times, because he did not know whether Esau was a friend or an enemy. But Esau ran to meet him, and threw his arms about his neck and kissed him.

And Esau said, "Who are these with you?"

And Jacob said, "Esau, this is my wife Rachel, and this is my wife Leah. And I have brought you a present, all this drove of cattle."

But Esau said, "Thank you, Jacob; keep the cattle. I have enough of my own." Thus Esau forgave Jacob for the mean things that he had done.

VII

THE COAT OF MANY COLORS

OF all his twelve sons, Jacob loved Joseph best. Most of the others were grown men, who were away all day at work in the fields; Benjamin was a baby. But Joseph was a bright lad who was a great companion for his father. And he was a good lad, who could always be trusted to do what was right, while some of the others gave Jacob a great deal of trouble.

Joseph's older brothers were stout farmers who spent most of their time attending to their cattle. They expected to milk the cows and feed the sheep and ride the camels all the rest of their days, and wished for nothing better. But Joseph, even as a boy, had made up his mind to be a great person, a prince, or perhaps a king. He thought that he would like to sit on a throne, and wear a crown, and be a mighty ruler. And this his father liked; for Jacob, too, in his own boyhood, had made long plans. So his father gave him a coat such as princes wore, a coat of many colors; and he wore it every day, even when he went to tend the sheep, — a shining coat, reaching to his heels. But

his older brothers teased him, and called him names, and disliked him.

One time, when they came home from the pasture in their rough clothes, and found Joseph wearing his fine coat, they said, "Well, Prince Joseph, what have you been dreaming about to-day?"

And Joseph said, "I dreamed that we were all binding sheaves in the field, and my sheaf arose and stood upright, and your sheaves came round about, and bowed down to my sheaf."

And that made his brothers very angry. "What," they said, "shall you be ruler over us?"

Another time, after the cows were milked and the older brothers came in to wash their hands for supper, and found Joseph with his bright coat flapping about his ankles, they said, "Well, King Joseph, what foolish dream have you had to-day?"

And Joseph answered, "To-day I dreamed that the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowed down to me."

Even his father did not quite like that. "What," he said, "shall your mother and I and your brothers bow down to you?"

But his brothers hated him. And once, when four of

them so misbehaved themselves that Joseph told his father what they had done, they hated him yet the more.

Now, when Joseph was seventeen years old, his brothers took the sheep one day and led them so far in search of green pastures that their father did not know where they had gone. So he called Joseph. "Joseph," he said, "you know which way your brothers went; go after them and see if all is well with them and with the flocks, and bring me word again." So Joseph started out to find his brothers, and here he searched and there he searched, till at last he found a man who knew where they had gone, and there they were. So his brothers looked up, and in the distance, shining in the sun, they saw the coat of many colors, like a walking rainbow. And they said, "There is the dreamer!" And some said, "Come, now, let us kill him and we shall see what will become of his dreams." And others said, "No, let us not kill him. That will do us no good. Let us sell him; we will get some money." So when Joseph came near, they laid hold of him, and pulled off his colored coat, and put him down in a deep pit till they should make up their minds what to do with him, whether to kill him or to sell him.

There, then, was Joseph, in the pit, calling and crying;

and his brothers sat down to eat their supper. And as they ate, they saw in the distance a caravan of merchants on their camels, riding down from Gilead with bags of spices and balm and myrrh, to Egypt. And as they passed, the brothers hailed them and said, "We have a boy to sell. What will you give for him?" And they pulled up Joseph out of the pit, and the merchants looked at him, and said, "We will give twenty pieces of silver." So Joseph's brothers sold him for twenty pieces of silver. And the merchants put him on the back of a camel, and away they went.

Then said the brothers one to another, "What shall we say to father?"

And some said, "Let us kill a goat, and take the coat of many colors and dip it in the blood, and tell father that we found it in a field." And that they did. They carried the bloody coat to Jacob, and said, "See what we found. Is it not Joseph's coat?"

And Jacob cried out at the sight of it. "Yes," he said, "it is my son's coat. Some wild beast has devoured him. Joseph is no doubt torn to pieces." And he mourned for him, day after day, and nobody could comfort him.

But the men of the caravan carried Joseph down to Egypt, and there sold him to a man named Potiphar, who

THERE IS THE DREAMER

was the captain of the guard and the keeper of the king's prison, and he put Joseph into the prison to wait upon the prisoners.

The king of Egypt was called Pharaoh. And in Pharaoh's prison at that time were the king's chief butler and chief baker. One morning, when Joseph took them their breakfast, he saw that they both looked very sad.

So he said, "What is the matter? Why do you look so sad?"

They said, "We have each had a strange dream, and nobody can tell us what it means."

Joseph said, "Tell me what it was."

Then the butler answered, "In my dream I saw a vine with three branches, and ripe grapes grew upon them, and I pressed the juice into Pharaoh's cup."

And Joseph said, "I will tell you the meaning of that: in three days, Pharaoh will take you out of prison, and you will again be his chief butler. When that comes true, remember me and bring me out of this prison."

Then the baker said, "In my dream, I had on my head three baskets full of bread for Pharaoh, and the birds came and ate the bread of the top basket."

And Joseph said, "In three days, Pharaoh will take you out of prison and cut off your head."

And all this came to pass, for the third day was Pharaoh's birthday, and he pardoned the chief butler, and beheaded the chief baker. The butler, however, did not remember Joseph.

VIII

THE SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE

TWO years passed by, and Joseph was still in the prison. Then, one night, Pharaoh dreamed. And in his dream he stood by the river, and seven fat cows were feeding on the bank, and seven lean cows came and ate them up. And he dreamed again, and seven full ears of corn grew upon one stalk, and seven thin ears ate them up. The next morning, when Pharaoh told his dreams, nobody could explain them. Then, at last, the chief butler remembered Joseph. And he said to Pharaoh, "There is a slave in the prison who can tell the meaning of dreams. One time, when the chief baker and I were there, he told us what our dreams meant and it came true." So Pharaoh sent for Joseph. And Joseph shaved himself and put on his best clothes, and went out of the prison into the palace.

And Pharaoh told his dreams. And Joseph said, "Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, and they shall be followed by seven years of famine." And Joseph said, "The thing to do is

this: Let food be laid up in storehouses during the good years to feed the people during the bad years."

Pharaoh said, "You are the man to do it. You shall be in charge of this business." And he took off his signet ring and put it on Joseph's hand, and dressed him in royal robes, and put a gold chain about his neck, and set him over the land of Egypt. And Joseph rode through the streets in the king's chariot, and everybody bowed down before him.

Then came the seven years of plenty, and everything grew by handfuls. Joseph made great storehouses, and put into them so much grain that it could no more be measured than the sand of the sea. Then followed the seven years of famine, and nothing grew at all, and the people were very hungry, and they came to Joseph, and he opened the storehouses and sold them food to eat.

Even in Joseph's old home, the famine was upon the land, and Joseph's brothers came down to Egypt to buy grain. But Benjamin, the youngest brother, they left with their father. So they appeared before Joseph, and he knew them, but they did not know him. He sat upon a throne, ruling the land of Egypt, and the poor farmers never thought of their brother Joseph. And Joseph punished them for their wickedness.

"You men," he said, "are spies." And he had them put in prison.

They said, "We are no spies. We are twelve sons of our father Jacob; one is with our father, and one is dead; and we have come to buy grain."

And Joseph said, "Now I will prove you. Let me see your other brother. I will keep one of you in prison. The rest of you go and carry back your corn, and bring me down your other brother."

So they left Simeon behind, and returned home very sad. And when they opened their sacks of grain, there was a bag of money in the mouth of each sack, just what they had paid. And they knew not what to think. But when they told their father what had happened and how the governor of the land wanted to see Benjamin, Jacob would not let him go. "I have lost Joseph," he said, "and now Simeon is gone. I will keep Benjamin."

But by and by the grain was almost all eaten, and they began to be very hungry, and there was nothing to do but to go again to Egypt, and they dared not go without Benjamin. So one day his father kissed the boy, with tears in his eyes, and let him go, and with him he sent a present in a basket for the governor, balm and honey, spice and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds.

So they came again to Joseph's palace, and Joseph's steward brought Simeon out of prison, and told them that they were all to come to dinner that day at noon. So at noon they came, and Joseph met them, dressed in his splendid garments, and he said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke?"

And they said, "He is well."

"And is this your youngest brother?" and he said, "God be gracious unto thee, my son."

And suddenly he turned about and went into another room to hide his tears. Then he washed his face and came out, and they had dinner. But he gave Benjamin five times as much to eat as any of the others. So they had a very pleasant time.

Now Joseph had told his steward that when he filled the sacks, he should put into Benjamin's sack a silver cup. And nobody knew it but the steward. So early the next morning, with Simeon and Benjamin, off they started very happily for home, singing as they went. And by and by, they heard a sound of voices following, and there was Joseph's steward and some other men.

And the steward said, "Stop, you thieves, and give me my master's silver cup which you have stolen."

And the brothers stopped, and said, "We are no thieves.

We have taken neither gold nor silver from your master's palace. Search us, and the man with whom you find the cup shall die."

"Very well," he said, "the man with whom the cup is found shall be my slave." So he searched the sacks, beginning with the oldest brother and ending with the youngest, and in Benjamin's sack, there was the cup!

And they all cried out in great grief, and tore their clothes, for that was the custom, and back they went to Joseph's palace. And Judah, one of the brothers, spoke to Joseph. "My lord," he said, "you asked to see our little brother, and we brought him down. And our father said as we came away, 'If mischief befall him, you shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave,' and now if we go back without our brother, our father will die. Let me take his place. I will be your slave; and let him go."

And Joseph sent everybody out of the room, except his brothers. And he said, "I am Joseph. Come near to me, I pray you. I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. And God has made me ruler of all Egypt." And as they were amazed, he said, "Do you not see that I am indeed your brother? Go back now and bring my father, and all your flocks and herds, and your wives and children, and come and live with me." And he kissed his brothers.

And the next day he gave them wagons for his father and their wives and children, and sent them away.

So Jacob saw his son Joseph, for whom he had mourned as dead. And all the family moved down to Egypt, and Pharaoh gave them pastures for their sheep.

IX

THE BURNING BUSH

JOSEPH and his brothers had many sons and daughters, and they in their turn had many sons and daughters; and even after they were grown up they were all called the Children of Israel; for Israel, you remember, was the new name of their father Jacob.

And years passed, and years passed, and Pharaoh died, and another Pharaoh reigned in his stead. And the Egyptians forgot how Joseph had saved their fathers from starving in the seven years of famine. And they made the Children of Israel their slaves, and sent them into their fields to work, and set taskmasters over them with whips. And the new Pharaoh said to his princes, "The Children of Israel are more and mightier than we. We must keep them from increasing." So they made a law that all the boy babies of the Children of Israel should be put to death as soon as they were born.

Now there was a man and his wife who had two children, a girl of eight or ten, named Miriam, and a boy of three, named Aaron. And just at the time of this law, there came

a little new boy baby. And his mother hid him, so that the Egyptians should not take him away and kill him. But it is very hard to hide a baby. So after three months his mother made a basket of bulrushes, and put pitch on the inside to keep the water out, and laid the baby in the basket, and set the basket in the river, near the bank among the reeds. And she told little Miriam to stay near, and see what would happen. So Miriam hid herself in the bushes and watched and waited, and by and by who should come down to the water but the princess herself, the daughter of Pharaoh. And the princess saw the basket and sent her maid to fetch it. And when she opened it, there was the baby. And the baby began to cry.

And the princess said, "This is one of the babies of the Children of Israel." And she was very sorry.

Then Miriam came and said, "Princess, if you want a good nurse to take care of the baby for you, I think I can find one."

And the princess said, "Go, find her, and bring her to me."

So Miriam went and brought the baby's mother. And the princess said, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will pay you."

So the mother nursed her baby in peace, and when he

became a big boy, she took him to the king's palace, and he lived there with the princess as if he had been a prince himself. And his name was Moses.

So years passed, and the boy became a man. The princess had sent him to school, and he had learned all that the best teachers could tell him. He was very wise. But he never forgot that he was one of the Children of Israel. When he saw his people working in the fields, and the taskmasters urging them with whips, he was sad and troubled. One day, as he passed by, and saw an Egyptian beating one of the Children of Israel, he could restrain himself no longer. He saved the man and killed the Egyptian. Then he found that the thing was known, and that Pharaoh had discovered that he was really on the side of the Children of Israel. And he had to run away to save his life.

Now the land which was next to Egypt was called Arabia, and to Arabia went Moses, and there he found a well. And flocks of sheep were feeding by it, some of them tended by men and some by women. But the men were very unkind to the women and kept them from drawing water for their sheep. And as Moses sat by the well, there came seven sisters with a flock of sheep, and the shepherds would not let them get any water. But Moses stood up and

drove away the shepherds, and drew water for the seven sisters, and watered their flocks himself.

So the sisters went home to their father, and he said, "How is it that you are come so soon to-day?" They said, "An Egyptian beat the shepherds, and watered our sheep."

Their father said, "Where is the man? Why did you not bring him home to dinner?"

So they found Moses, and brought him home, and when they knew that he had no place in which to stay, they asked him to live with them. And pretty soon he married one of the seven sisters.

One day, as Moses kept the flock of his father-in-law, and led them here and there for pasture, he came to a high mountain, and at the foot of the mountain he saw a fire. There was a bush burning, and yet, as he watched it, the bush was not burnt. And he said to himself, "I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." And as he came near, he heard a voice; and the voice said, "Moses, Moses!"

And he answered, "Here I am."

And the voice said, "I am the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob. I have seen the sorrows of my people, the Children of Israel, how the Egyptians make them work, and whip them. Come now, return to Egypt, and tell Pha-

MOSES BY THE BURNING BUSH

raoh to let my people go that they may meet me here at this mountain."

But Moses said, "Pharaoh will not hear me."

And God said, "I will make Pharaoh hear you."

Then Moses said, "I am no speaker."

And God answered, "Look, who is that coming?" And Moses looked, and there was his brother Aaron. And he ran to meet him and kissed him. And God said, "Aaron shall go with you and speak for you."

So Moses went back to his father-in-law and told him what had happened at the burning bush. And the next day, Moses and Aaron started for Egypt. There they found the Children of Israel working very hard, and the task-masters beating them with whips to make them work harder. And Moses and Aaron said to the people, "God spoke to us in Arabia, and sent us to tell you to meet him there beside a mountain. He has seen your affliction and has promised to help you." And the people were very glad.

X

THE TEN PLAGUES

NE day, as Pharaoh the king was sitting in his palace, in came one who said, "Two of the Children of Israel are at the door, and would like to speak with you."

And Pharaoh said, "Let them come in."

And in came Moses and Aaron. "Pharaoh," they said, "we have a message for you from our God. He wishes you to give the Children of Israel a holiday, that they may go out into the country, and meet Him at a mountain in Arabia."

Then Pharaoh was very angry. "Who is your God," he said, "that I should obey Him? There is work to be done: there are cities to be built; this is our busy season; this is no time for a holiday." And Pharaoh sent away Moses and Aaron, and called for the taskmasters who had charge of the Children of Israel, and said, "These people have asked for a holiday. They are idle. Give them more work."

Now the Children of Israel were making brick and building the walls of houses and towers; and the way to make brick was to take clay and mix it with straw and bake it;

and the taskmasters provided the straw. But the taskmasters heard what Pharaoh said, and they stopped the supply of straw. "You must get straw for yourselves wherever you can find it: but you must make just as many bricks as you made before." And when the Children of Israel could not do it, they were beaten with whips. So they cried out against Moses, saying, "You have done us harm instead of good."

Then Moses and Aaron went again to Pharaoh, and Aaron had a rod in his hand, and he threw it on the floor at the king's feet, and the rod became a serpent. But Egypt was a great place for tricks of magic. Pharaoh had magicians at his court, who performed before him every day. So he called for two magicians, and in came Jannes and Jambres, each with a rod, and they cast their rods on the floor, and in a moment there were two more wriggling serpents fighting with Aaron's serpent. And although Aaron's serpent chased these two and ate them up, Pharaoh only laughed, and would not let the people go.

But the next morning, when the king went down to the river, there was Moses waiting for him. And Moses said, "Pharaoh, if you will not let the people go, God will make this river red like blood, so that nobody may drink out of it."

And so it was. That great river, the Nile, which flows through the midst of Egypt, was red like blood, for a whole week. But when it cleared again, Pharaoh said, "I have seen it like that many a time, after the spring rains." And he would not let the people go.

Then Moses called again upon the king, and said, "Pharaoh, if you still refuse, God will bring frogs out of the river till they cover all the land." And so it was. The frogs came: first, along the bank; then, across the road so that nobody could go that way; then in crowds and crowds, crawling and hopping and skipping, up the streets and up the lanes and up the steps of houses. And at night, there were frogs in the bed; and in the morning, at breakfast, there were frogs on the table. And Pharaoh said, "This is more than I can bear. Take away the frogs, and I will do whatever you wish."

But after the frogs had gone back into the river, Pharaoh said, "That was not so very bad. Almost every year, we have a plague of frogs." And he would not let the people go.

Then, week after week, all kinds of dreadful things came one upon another. Once there were lice, like the dust of the ground; then there were such swarms of flies that nobody could eat or sleep; after that, the horses and cattle

were all sick. Then people had boils; and there was a very grievous hail, and thunder and lightning so that fire ran along upon the ground. The locusts came, blown by the east wind, and ate all the leaves and the grass. And after the locusts there was a storm of sand, and for three days it was so dark, that people could feel it with their hands. And every time, when the trouble was worst, Pharaoh said to Moses, "Take it away, and I will let the people go."

But when the plague was over, Pharaoh said, "I don't believe that God did it. It was only the weather or the wind." And he broke his promise.

Thus there were nine plagues. Then Moses said to the Children of Israel, "The tenth plague is at hand. This very night, Pharaoh will beg you to go. Get yourselves ready. There is a long journey before you. Let every family prepare supper. Kill a lamb and roast it, and bake bread. But the time is short; you cannot wait for the bread to rise; make it without leaven" (or, as we say, without yeast). "Do not even sit down at the table: stand up, with your coats and hats on, and eat in haste. For to-night, God will send a sudden sickness upon the Egyptians, and in every house there will be one dead. You must mark your houses. Take of the blood of the lamb and strike it on the upper post and on the two side posts of your doors.

Then God will pass over you when He comes to punish the Egyptians."

And at midnight so it was. And there was a great cry through all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron. "This is the end," he said; "get you gone out of the land, you and all your people."

And the Egyptians hurried them. "Quick!" they said, "go out of Egypt before we all die."

But the Children of Israel said, "Shall we go with empty hands after all the work which we have done for you? What will you give us?"

And the Egyptians gave them jewels of gold and jewels of silver. So they departed. There was a full moon that night, and in the light of it they made their way out of all the cities where they lived, and they turned their faces toward Arabia. But now they went not only to meet God at the mountain, but to be a new nation, and never again to live as slaves in Egypt.

XI

THE RED SEA

N the middle of the night, under the round moon, the Children of Israel started on their journey. The fathers and mothers carried the babies, the boys and girls ran and danced beside them, and they drove their flocks and herds before them. And as they went, they talked about the ten plagues, and especially about the last and worst of all, when the firstborn died in every house in Egypt. "Except our houses," they said. "God passed over our houses, and saved our lives, and brought us out." And they said, "We must keep the memory of this night forever. When we have a land of our own, and are settled there, then every year when the spring is green and the moon is shining full, we will have a supper of roast lamb and bread unleavened, such as we had to-night, and when the children say, 'Why do we have this supper and eat unleavened bread?' we will reply, 'Children, this is the feast of the Lord's Passover, when He passed over our houses, and saved us from our slavery in Egypt.'"

So they journeyed all that night and all the next day.

But in the meantime, the Egyptians had begun to recover from their fear. "Yes," they said, "we have indeed been stricken by a fearful pestilence. There is hardly a house in which there is not one dead. And Moses says that this is a punishment upon us because we would not let the Children of Israel go. But we are not so sure of that. How do we know that the Children of Israel or their God had anything to do with it? We were foolish to be frightened and let them go. Now there is nobody left to do our work. All our carpenters and masons, all our brick-makers and bricklayers, all our hired men, have gone away: and all our cooks and washerwomen have gone with them. What shall we do? Come, let us go after them, and bring them back." And Pharaoh sent for his chariot in which he rode when he went to war, and ordered his captains to bring up six hundred other chariots, the best that there were in Egypt. And there was a great clattering of horses' hoofs, and a great clashing of swords and battle-axes, in the street before the king's palace. And Pharaoh came out, and away they went, as fast as they could go, after the Children of Israel.

Now the Children of Israel, after a long day's march, were very tired, and they stopped to rest by the Red Sea. On the other side of the sea was the land of Arabia, where they were going to meet God beside a mountain. And on

the morrow, they expected to walk around the head of the sea, and so reach the other side. But suddenly, in the far distance, as the sun was setting, there was a gleam of light, and they knew that it was the shining armor of the Egyptian soldiers. And there they were, the poor Children of Israel, with the soldiers behind them and the sea before them, and no way of escape to either right or left. And they cried out against Moses, and said, "Why did you bring us here to die? Were there not graves in Egypt? Did we not tell you that we did not want to come? Oh, that we had stayed in our slavery! That was bad enough, but this is worse."

But Moses said, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see what God will show you. God is on your side, and not an Egyptian shall be able to hurt you." So the sun went down, and night came on. And with the night came the fog, and the moon, and the wind. And the fog settled down on the Egyptians so that they could not see the Children of Israel. And upon the sea the strong wind from the east blew and blew, so that it drove away the fog from the Children of Israel, and the clear moon shone upon them. So it was like a pillar of cloud behind them, and a pillar of fire before them. And harder and harder blew the strong wind upon the shallow sea, till clear across from shore to

shore there was a place where they could see the bottom, like a narrow path of land across the sea. And Moses cried, "Go forward!" And into the sea marched the Children of Israel, along the path of land, in the great gale of wind, with water on the left and water on the right, and the spray dashing upon them.

And when the Egyptian army got out of the fog, and came in sight of the sea, there were the Children of Israel more than half across. And the captains commanded the drivers of the chariots, and in they went, as fast as the horses could carry them, chasing the Children of Israel. But it was a bad road for chariots. Deeper and deeper, the wheels sank in the mud. And then, as day began to dawn, the wind changed. Instead of blowing from the east, it blew from the west, and the water came back with it, and the path was covered, and the sea returned to its strength. And when the sun arose, there were the Children of Israel safe on the shore of Arabia, but the Egyptians were nowhere to be seen. The sea had covered them. They had sunk like lead in the mighty waters.

And on the shore the Children of Israel sang a song of praise and thanksgiving. Moses led the voices of the men, and Miriam and all the women, with timbrels in their hands, joined in the chorus. "Sing ye to the Lord," they

sang, "for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." Thus God overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea, and the Children of Israel were saved from their enemies.

XII

THE GOLDEN CALF

FTER the great adventure of the Red Sea, the Children of Israel started on their way to the Mountain of the Burning Bush. They had never been away from home before, and they did not know how to behave. So when they were uncomfortable, as people are likely to be on a long journey, instead of taking it cheerfully, they complained and cried.

One time, they were very thirsty, and there was no water. And they all said, "Oh, that we had stayed in Egypt, where there was plenty of water!" And they said to Moses, "Why did you not let us alone? You have brought us into this desert to kill us with thirst." But Moses found a spring of water coming out of a great rock, and gave them to drink.

Another time, they were very hungry, and there was nothing to eat. And they cried out against Moses, and said, "Oh, that we had stayed in Egypt, by the flesh-pots! You have brought us into this desert to kill us with hunger!" But Moses said, "Be patient. God is taking

care of you. He will feed you." And when they waked up the next morning, the ground was covered with something which looked like frost. And they gathered it, and ground it, and baked it, and it was very nice to eat. And the name of it was manna.

So they ate the manna, and they liked it so much that they said it was good enough even for angels. But as day after day passed and there was manna for breakfast, and manna for dinner, and manna for supper, and nothing else, they came to hate the sight of it. Again they wished that they were back in Egypt. "When we were in Egypt," they said, "we had fish to eat, and cucumbers to eat with it, and melons and leeks and onions and garlic. Now we have nothing but manna." So they went on their way complaining, and Moses had a very hard time with them.

But at last they came to the mountain where they were to meet God. And there they pitched their tents, and put out their flocks and herds to pasture. And on the morning of the third day, there was a great storm of thunder and lightning, and the mountain, which was called Sinai, was covered with black clouds, and smoked like a volcano, and out of the smoke and cloud came a sound like the blowing of a mighty wind, and like the rolling of thunder, and like the voice of a loud trumpet. And the Children of

Israel were exceedingly afraid. But Moses said, "I am going to climb the mountain. I am going up into the cloud and smoke and thunder. God told me that He would speak to us in this place. I am going up to meet Him." And he took with him a young man named Joshua.

"You wait," he said to the people, "till I come back and tell you what God says."

So Moses and Joshua climbed up the steep side of the mountain, and the black cloud hid them from the people's sight. And the storm increased in fury. The lightning flashed its fires of red and green, the rain came down in torrents, and louder and louder pealed the voice of the wind and the thunder and the trumpet. And as the people stood watching and waiting, they trembled so that their knees knocked together. But night came, and Moses did not return. All the next day they waited, but he did not appear. And the days grew into weeks, and the weeks into a month, till the people said, "Moses is dead. He lost his way, or he fell over a cliff, or he was struck by lightning. What shall we do? What shall we do?" And they made Aaron their leader.

Now the people of Egypt, among whom the Children of Israel had lived so long, had strange ideas about God. They thought that God lived in certain animals. And they

IT SOUNDS TO ME LIKE SINGING

said their prayers to these animals, and made images of them to put in their churches. And as years passed and years passed, till the time of Joseph was as far away from them as the time of Columbus is from us, a good many of the Children of Israel, being slaves in Egypt, forgot the religion of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and became like the Egyptians. So now they said to Aaron, "Make us an image of God." And Aaron said, "Give me your earrings." Now all the men and women wore gold earrings, and they gave them to Aaron, and he melted them together and made a golden calf. And the people said, "This is our God." And they began to pray to it, and to dance and sing around it.

But all this time, Moses was speaking with God. God told Moses what He wished the people to do. And these things were put in the Ten Commandments, and were written on two smooth tables — or, as we say, tablets — of stone. And Moses took the Ten Commandments, and started down the mountain.

And on the way he heard a noise; and he said to Joshua, "What is that noise?"

And Joshua said, "It sounds like shouting. There must be a battle."

But Moses said, "It sounds to me like singing."

THE GOLDEN CALF

So they came in sight of the camp. And there was the Golden Calf, and all the people singing and dancing around it. And Moses was so angry that he took the tables of stone and threw them down the mountain, and they broke in pieces. And the people were ashamed and afraid. And he told them what a foolish and wicked thing they had done. "God," he said, "has just been telling me that we must not worship images." And he destroyed the Golden Calf.

Then he went again upon the mountain, and asked God to forgive his people. And God gave him the Ten Commandments over again. Thus the Children of Israel met God at the mountain, and were told what they must do, and were ready at last to start upon their journey to the Promised Land.

XIII

THE PROPHET AND THE KING

NCE upon a time, when the world was younger than it is at present, and people believed that all the animals could speak Hebrew if they only would, a man was riding on an ass along a country road.

Sometimes the way went between wide farms which stretched out over the flat land. Sometimes it lay between vineyards, and had a stone wall on the right and on the left. Sometimes the man hastened the ass, striking her with a stick; because he had been sent for by the king and was in a hurry. Sometimes he let the ass take her own time, and she strayed now on this side of the road and now on that, cropping the thistles; because, although the man had been sent for by the king, he was not quite sure whether he ought to go or not.

The man's name was Balaam and the king's name was Balak. They were both of them heathen; that is, they did not know so much about God as the Children of Israel knew. But God knew them, and to Balaam God some-

times spoke, and told him what was right and what was wrong; so that people came to Balaam, even from distant lands, that he might tell them the will of God. Thus before a battle, a general or even a king might come and say, "Tell me, Balaam, is God for me or against me? Shall I lose or win?" And Balaam would go away by himself and ask God, and God would speak in Balaam's soul and teach him what to say, and Balaam would come back and say it. Many people thought that Balaam could do quite as he liked, and bless or curse as he pleased, and they said, "See, Balaam, here is gold and silver: come now, bless me and curse my enemy." But Balaam would speak only that which the Lord God taught him to speak.

Balak was the king of Moab. After the Children of Israel had come across the Red Sea out of Egypt, they wandered in the wilderness and lived in tents till they grew strong enough to go to war. They had no country of their own, but they meant to take the country which God had promised to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. There were already people living in that country, having walled cities and brave soldiers, and the Children of Israel had to grow very strong indeed before they could hope to take it away from them. But now the time had come. The Children of Israel were on the march. Only one country remained to

be crossed before they came to the Promised Land: and that was Moab.

So Balak, king of Moab, was filled with fear, and he sent for Balaam.

"Behold," he said, "there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. Come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people, else shall they lick us up as an ox licks up the grass of the field." And the princes of Balak came to Balaam with these words.

And Balaam said, "Stay here this night, and I will ask the Lord, and in the morning I will tell you." So the princes stayed at Balaam's house, and in the night God spoke in Balaam's soul, and God said, "Do not go to Balak. Thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed."

And when the morning was come, Balaam told the princes that he could not go.

But Balak was not satisfied. He sent more princes, and they came to Balaam with splendid promises. And Balaam answered, "I must do as the Lord says. If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God to do less or more. But wait another night, and I will see if the Lord will speak again."

And that night God did speak again, and God said, "Go with the men, but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." So in the morning he saddled his ass, and away he went with Balak's princes. And thus he rode, sometimes in haste and sometimes in doubt, between the farms and vineyards.

Now Balak had gone out to meet Balaam that he might take him to the top of a high hill whence he should curse the Children of Israel. And they two went together. And Balaam said, "I am come in vain. The Lord God is against you. Even as I came, the ass on which I rode refused to go and crushed my foot against the vineyard wall, and the ass said, 'Behold, there is an angel in the way,' and lo, there was an angel with a drawn sword to keep me back! I cannot do you any good. I cannot curse the Children of Israel."

But Balak urged him, and on they went. And as they climbed the hill, at last the army of Israel came in sight, all in their goodly tents along the valley, as gardens by the river's side, and as cedar trees beside the waters. And Balak built seven altars and offered on every altar a bullock and a ram; and Balaam prayed amidst the altars, and God told him what to say, and Balaam cried aloud and blessed the Children of Israel. Then Balak took Balaam

THE ASS AND THE ANGEL

to another mountain, to the top of Pisgah, and there built seven altars and offered on every altar a bullock and a ram; and Balaam prayed in the midst of the altars, and again he cried aloud and blessed the Children of Israel. And so a third time, on a third mountain, from the top of Peor.

Then Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together. And Balak said, "I called thee to curse my enemies, and thou hast blessed them these three times!" And Balaam answered, "That is what I told you before I came, what the Lord saith that will I speak." And he blessed them a fourth time. And Balaam rose up and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way.

XIV

THE WALLS OF JERICHO

HE Promised Land, toward which the Children of Israel were marching through King Balak's country, was bordered on that side by the river Jordan. The Jordan flows through a very deep valley from a large lake in the north to a large lake in the south: the northern lake is called the Sea of Galilee, and the southern is called the Dead Sea. King Balak's land was beside the Dead Sea; so when they had passed through that country they came to the river, and thus to the first place where they could cross over into the Promised Land. And on the other side of the river was a city, called Jericho. The first thing to do was to attack Jericho.

Moses was now dead, and in his place Joshua was the leader and general of Israel. Moses had climbed one day to the top of Mount Pisgah, to the high place where Balaam had stood with Balak, and there had looked over into the Promised Land. It lay before him, full of hills and valleys, a good land and a large, with vineyards and olive trees, and streams of water, and walled cities. There

Abraham and Isaac and Jacob had fed their flocks. Moses had done his great work; he had brought his people out of Egypt, and had given them the laws of God, and had made them a nation and an army, and had led them to the very entrance of the Promised Land. Below were the people waiting and waiting, as they had waited at the foot of Mount Sinai for Moses to come down. But this time he did not come. On the mountain top, in sight of the Promised Land, he died. And Joshua took his place.

So General Joshua sent two men to go as spies to Jericho. They were to enter very quietly into the city, without letting anybody know who they were, and, having found out all they could, they were to come back and report. So they went to Jericho and found a lodging place, and began to look about. They saw that the town had a wall around it, and that the gate was shut every evening as the sun went down. And they could see at a glance that the people were rich. But the men of Jericho discovered the spies and told the king, and the king sent to their lodging place to take them.

But the woman of the house, whose name was Rahab, was very good to the spies. Her house was by the city wall, and on the flat roof there were stalks of flax drying in the sun. So when the pursuers came knocking at the door,

Rahab hid the spies under the flax, and sent off the pursuers on a vain search. And when they were gone she took a stout rope and let down the spies out of her window down the wall, and while the pursuers ran one way toward the river, the spies ran another way toward the hills, and so escaped.

And Rahab said, "We have all heard about you here. We know how you came over the Red Sea, and how the Lord is with you; and we are all afraid. When you take the town, have pity on me and on my father and mother and on my brothers and sisters, and save us alive."

And the spies said, "Bind a scarlet line in this window by which we escape, and when we come back with the army of Israel we will spare all who are in this house."

Then they climbed down the rope, and away they went to the hills, where they stayed three days till the pursuit was over. And they returned to Joshua, and said, "The Lord has delivered the city into our hands. They are all afraid of us."

Then Joshua sent his captains among the people to tell them what to do. "The priests," he said, "shall go down first into the river, and the people shall follow." So the priests went, carrying the Ark of the Covenant; that is, the great chest in which were the Ten Commandments cut in

stone, as Moses brought them down from Sinai. And as they went, it was like the Red Sea over again. They marched across as if the river had been a sandy road. And in the middle of the river stood the priests with the Ark till all the people were gone over. And they took twelve stones out of the river where the priests had stood, and built an altar with them on the other side, and thanked God that He had brought them at last into the good land which He had promised to their fathers.

The next thing to do was to take Jericho. At first, the men of Jericho came out to fight, but they soon ran back and hid behind their walls and locked their gate. And the Children of Israel made a camp around the city so that nobody went out or came in.

And Joshua said, "Form a procession: first the armed men, then seven priests with trumpets, then the Ark, and then the people. And march around the city. Let the priests blow their trumpets, but let all the rest of you keep silence. Let nobody speak a word, until I tell you to shout. Then shall ye shout!" So they marched around the city, and the people of Jericho looked on from the walls in great amazement. And the next day, they did it a second time; and the third day a third time, and so on for six days.

At last, on the seventh day, the Children of Israel rose

up very early, just as the sun came up over Mount Pisgah. And that day they went around and around the city seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets a longer and louder blast than ever, Joshua cried to the people, "Shout! for the Lord hath given you the city." And all the people shouted with a great shout. And the walls fell flat, and the armed men marched straight in and took the city.

Indeed, the walls were already falling that day when the spies climbed down over them hand under hand on Rahab's rope. For the true walls of a city are the stout hearts of its citizens, and these had failed for fear. Thus the Children of Israel began the conquest of the Promised Land. But they spared the people who were in the house which had a line of scarlet bound in the window on the broken wall.

XV

THE WEDGE OF GOLD

HERE was a soldier in the army of Joshua whose name was Achan. He had taken part in the siege of Jericho. He had marched before the Ark around the city; he had joined in with all his might when the army shouted with a great shout; and he had rushed with the others into the streets when the walls fell flat.

Now Joshua had given strict orders that no man should take anything for himself. All the gold and silver and whatever else was of value was to be saved for the Lord: it was to be put into the common treasury. But Achan had stolen something.

The citizens of Jericho were neither strong nor brave to fight, but they were rich. The sun beat down upon the town, and the mist came drifting in from the river, and it was very hot there, and the heat made the people weak; but they lived in handsome houses, and wore fine clothes every day, and had money to spend. To Achan, who had been born in the wilderness, and had never known any other roof than the top of a tent, and had never seen a city

in all his life, the houses of Jericho seemed like the magic treasure houses of the fairy stories.

So when Achan came with the other soldiers, running though the Jericho streets, and breaking into the houses, he looked about him with great surprise. And when, at last, in one house he found a wedge of gold, it blazed in his eyes like the sun shining in the clear sky at noon. Beside the gold was a glittering pile of two hundred pieces of silver, and a splendid cloak made in Babylon, stiff with embroidery and colored like a jewel. And Achan was so dazzled by these riches that he did not see the difference between right and wrong. He took them for his own. Under his gown he hid them, and back he hurried to his tent, and then he dug a hole in the earth in the middle of the tent and buried them.

The next day, Joshua sent two spies to visit the next city, which was called Ai. And they came back and reported that Ai was only a small town, and that there was no need to send the whole army to take it. Three thousand men, they said, would be enough. Now Ai was built upon a hill. So up the soldiers climbed, expecting a quick and easy victory, but the men of Ai came out to meet them like a pack of bears and tigers, and the men of Israel turned their backs like scared sheep, and ran away down the hill

as fast as they could go, and the men of Ai after them. So it was a great defeat.

And Joshua was troubled exceedingly, and he and all his captains tore their clothes and threw dust upon their heads, and lay down on the ground before the Ark all day; for that was the custom when men were in great distress of mind.

And as the night came on, Joshua cried, "O Lord God, why hast thou brought us into this land to give us into the hands of our enemies to destroy us? O Lord, what shall I say when the men of Israel turn their backs before their enemies?"

And God said, "Get up, Joshua. Why do you lie upon the ground? There is a thief in the camp. One of your soldiers has disobeyed your orders. Find him, and punish him; then shall you have victory instead of defeat."

So the first thing the next morning, Joshua made the army pass before him in a long procession, tribe after tribe, and he chose the tribe of Judah. Then he made the tribe of Judah pass before him, family by family, and he chose the family of Zerah. Then he made the family of Zerah pass before him, household by household, and he chose the household of Carmi. Then he made the household of Carmi pass before him, man by man, and he chose

Achan. And there was Achan discovered before all the people.

And Joshua said, "My son, tell me what you have done. Do not hide anything from me."

And Achan answered, "I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel. When we took Jericho, I saw a shining wedge of gold, and a goodly garment, and a pile of silver pieces, and I coveted them and carried them away and hid them in my tent. There they are, buried in the earth."

So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to Achan's tent, and there they found even as Achan had said. And they took the gold and silver and the garment and brought them to Joshua. And Joshua led Achan apart into a valley, and said, "Why hast thou troubled Israel? The Lord shall trouble thee this day." And Joshua commanded, and the soldiers stoned Achan with stones until he died, and a great heap of stones was piled upon his body.

Then Joshua attacked Ai again. But this time he was more careful. He sent a great company of soldiers by night into an ambush behind the town. And in the morning he marched up the hill, and when the men of Ai came out again, very bold and fierce, he pretended to be frightened and made his soldiers run away, so that the men of Ai ran after them. All the men of Ai ran out of the town

SO THEY STONED ACHAN

after the men of Israel. Then suddenly Joshua stopped and lifted up his spear, and the soldiers in the ambush saw it and they ran into Ai and began to burn the town. And the men of Ai looked back, and there was the whole town on fire. So they were between two armies. The army of the ambush was at the top of the hill, and the army which had pretended to run away was at the bottom. Thus the men of Ai were defeated with a great defeat.

XVI

THE RELIEF OF GIBEON

HIGH among the hills of the Promised Land lay a town called Gibeon. Men who ran away from the defeat at Ai came straggling into Gibeon, and told the news. "The Children of Israel," they said, "are coming with a great army. They have destroyed Jericho and Ai, and are on the march for Gibeon." Then the Gibeonites held a council and considered what to do. And they took men and dressed them in the oldest clothes which they could find, all rags and tatters, and put upon their feet the oldest shoes, all holes and patches, and gave them baskets in which were loaves of dry and mouldy bread. And they said, "Go down now to the camp of Israel and find Joshua and tell him thus and so."

So down they went, and came into the camp, walking very slowly, as if their feet were sore after a long journey, and as if they were too tired to go another step.

And they said, "We come from a far country to ask you to make a league of peace with us."

And the men of Israel said, "How do we know that you

are telling us the truth? It may be that you are our neighbors." And they brought them to Joshua, and Joshua said, "Who are you, and from whence do you come?"

And the men of Gibeon answered, "From a very far country. Why, these shoes we put on new the day we came away; and see them now. These clothes we had made for this journey, and we have worn them out on the way. This bread was fresh baked; it was taken hot out of the oven as we started; and now it is all dry and mouldy. The land where we live is over the hills and far away, but even there we have heard about you, and we have come to ask you to give us a promise of peace."

Then Joshua believed that what they said was true, and he made them a solemn promise that there should be peace between the men of Israel and the men of Gibeon. So they journeyed on together and after three days they came to a town among the hills, and Joshua said, "What town is this?" And the men of Gibeon answered, "This is Gibeon, where we live. But you have promised that you will be at peace with us. You must not destroy Gibeon as you destroyed Jericho and Ai." And the Children of Israel were very angry, and they said, "Come, let us kill them, and let us burn their city, for they lied to us." But Joshua answered, "No, we have given them our promise, and we

must do as we said." So they let them live; but they made them their servants, to cut wood and draw water.

Now the kings of five neighboring cities, when they heard that the men of Gibeon had made peace with the men of Israel, were much displeased. And they gathered their armies together and came up against Gibeon. And the Gibeonites sent messengers to Joshua, saying, "Come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for now that we have become your friends all of our neighbors have become our enemies." So Joshua gathered together all the people of war and all the mighty men of valor to fight with the kings who were encamped about the walls of Gibeon. All night they climbed the hills, and came upon the kings suddenly in the early morning, while all the camp was sleeping. And the kings and all their men waked up in a great fright when they heard the trumpets blowing and the men of Israel shouting, and they ran away, and the men of Israel ran after them. And there was a great storm that day of rain and hail, and the hailstones beat in the faces of the kings' men. As for the five kings, they hid themselves in a cave.

So Joshua and his soldiers chased the enemy down the long valley. And somebody told Joshua where the kings had gone, and he had his men block up the mouth of the

cave and leave a guard there, while the rest of the army fought the battle. Now in the afternoon, as the sun began to go down and the moon began to shine with a faint light, like a dim ball of gray silver, Joshua wished that the day might last all night. For he knew that as soon as it became dark the battle would be over and the enemy would escape. So he cried aloud and said, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." And it seemed as if the sun and moon stood still, that day was so long and the victory was so great. And long after, the soldiers sang about it in their war songs: how the stars in the sky fought on the side of Israel, and the sun and moon stood still to see the battle.

But at last the soldiers came back from following the enemy. And Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring those five kings unto me out of the cave." So they took away the great stones and brought the five kings. And Joshua made the five kings lie upon the ground before all the army, and he called his captains and said, "Come near, and put your feet upon the necks of these kings." And they came near and put their feet upon the necks of them. And Joshua said, "Fear not, be strong and of good courage; for thus shall the Lord do unto all your enemies against whom ye fight."

XVII

THE BATTLE OF THE GREAT PLAIN

RIGHT across the Promised Land, between the river and the sea, lay a great plain. Mountains stood about it on every side, and through the midst of it ran a winding river, called the Kishon. Some of the tribes of Israel had settled among the hills on the north; others had settled among the hills on the south. But the plain itself was held by the enemy. They had a king named Jabin, and a general named Sisera, and nine hundred chariots of iron. And for twenty years, they mightily oppressed the Children of Israel. They were so strong and cruel that the Children of Israel did not dare to show themselves, but went along the by-paths, or through the woods, keeping out of sight. And none of them had either shield or spear.

Now there was a woman in the land who was braver than any of the men, and her name was Deborah. She was not only brave, but wise, so that people used to come to her from all directions to ask her questions, and she told them what to do. Thus she sat every day under a palm tree,

listening to the people and answering them. Many who came told Deborah how poor and miserable they were, and how King Jabin's men, the Canaanites, troubled them, and stole all that they had, and were very bad to them. So Deborah knew how the land was filled with suffering.

At last, one day, she sent for a man named Barak. "Barak," she said, as he came under the palm tree, "you know how the Canaanites are treating our people, day by day, and year by year, and how since Joshua died we have no leader. We must stop it. You must take the lead. God has spoken in my soul, and has told me that you are the man, and that this is the time. Go now, and get an army."

But Barak said, "Deborah, we are all afraid, and we have no shields or spears, nothing but sticks out of the woods, and Sisera has nine hundred chariots of iron. Am I to do this thing alone, or will you go with me? If you will go with me, I will go: but if you will not go with me, I will not go."

And Deborah answered, "I will surely go with you, but it will be a woman and not a man who shall have the honor of the victory."

So Barak sent messengers to all the tribes who lived among the hills by the Great Plain. Some of the tribes said

that they would not come, some said that they would think about it; but Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali sent soldiers, until Barak and Deborah had ten thousand men. In the meantime, Sisera gathered his great army, thousands upon thousands of footmen, and thousands upon thousands of prancing horses, and nine hundred chariots of iron. And Barak and his soldiers were on the side of Mount Tabor, and Sisera and his soldiers were in the Great Plain. And there came a storm out of the north, as if the clouds were an army in the sky pouring water out of great buckets. And Deborah cried, "Up, Barak; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand." And Barak rose up and his men with him, and down they charged over the side of the mountain. And the Great Plain was filled with mud by the beating of the rain, so that the wheels of the chariots sank like the wheels of Pharaoh's chariots in the Red Sea. And the Kishon overflowed its banks. And the army of Sisera fled east and west, and the army of Barak followed them.

Now Sisera, when he saw that he was defeated and that his chariot was stuck fast in the mud, leaped down in great haste and ran for his life. And as he ran he came to a tent away off among the hills, where a man lived whose name was Heber and his wife's name was Jael. Heber had no

JAEL TAKES THE TENT PIN

part in the battle of the day. He lived by himself, and was neither on the side of Barak nor on the side of Sisera. While the others were fighting he was in the distant pastures tending his sheep, and his wife was at home alone. So Sisera came breathless and weary with running, and Barak was following him far behind. And Jael came out to meet Sisera, and she asked him to come in and hide. "Turn in, my lord," she said, "turn in to me: fear not." So he went in. And he said, "Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty." And she opened a bottle and gave him milk to drink. And he lay down in the tent, and she covered him with a mantle, so that he was hid. And he said, "If anybody comes to the tent, and asks, 'Is there any man here?' you must say, 'No.'" Then he went to sleep, for he was very tired.

Then Jael took one of the big wooden pins which held the ropes of the tent, and in her other hand a workman's mallet, and when Sisera was sound asleep she went to him softly, and drove the pin straight through his head. And Barak and his men came running by in pursuit of Sisera: and Jael came to the tent door, and said, "Come here, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking." And Barak came in, and there was Sisera dead. This, you understand, was a long, long time ago, when people did not

know so much as we know now about the difference between right and wrong: and it was in the midst of war, when very dreadful things are done. Anyhow, Sisera was dead, and the Children of Israel were delivered from the Canaanites.

XVIII

THE ALTAR OF BAAL

OMETIMES the Children of Israel fought with the people who lived in the Promised Land, as Barak fought with Sisera in the Great Plain. Sometimes they made friends with them and learned their ways; and that was worse than war, because their ways were very bad. They called God Baal, and they thought that there were many Baals, one for each place. They believed that Baal sent the sun and the rain and made things grow in the fields, and they told the Children of Israel that if they wished the sun to shine and the rain to fall they must build altars to Baal and say their prayers to him. And some of the Children of Israel did so. They forgot God and served Baal. But the men who served Baal thought that Baal did not care whether they were good or bad, and so they did not care either.

Now, after the battle of the Great Plain there was peace for many years. And the Children of Israel had farms and pastures in the plain. There were wide fields of wheat and

barley, and droves of sheep and oxen. Then the Midianites came.

The Midianites were wild people who lived in the deserts beyond the Jordan. They had no cities to dwell in, but wandered about from place to place, riding on swift camels, sleeping in tents, and stealing cattle. And some of them came over and saw the Great Plain, how it lay shining in the sun, with the river winding in and out between the pleasant farms. And they went back and told the others, and pretty soon, when the harvest was ripe, there came a great army of Midianites. They had two kings, named Zebah and Zalmunna, and two princes, named Oreb, "the Raven," and Zeeb, "the Wolf." The kings and the princes wore red cloaks, and had gold chains around their camels' necks; and all the dark-faced men who rode behind them had great rings of gold hung in their ears.

Over the Jordan they came, like swarms of locusts, and settled down upon the Great Plain. They trampled upon the farms, and stole the wheat, and drove away the sheep and oxen. Before they came the land looked like the Garden of Eden, but after they went away it was like a desolate wilderness. And the Children of Israel were poor and hungry and miserable. And the next year, when they planted the fields again and the barley and the wheat

were ripe and ready for the harvest, over came the Midianites and destroyed the farms as they had done before. And so on, year after year, until the Children of Israel hid themselves in dens among the mountains and in caves among the rocks. And it seemed as if God had forgotten them.

But in a village beside the Great Plain there was an altar of Baal. It was made of large stones piled together, and was on the top of a cliff, and a grove of trees stood around it. And one morning the people of the village waked as usual and looked up towards the altar of Baal, and, behold, it was broken down. Not one stone lay upon another. And all the trees of the grove were cut down. And in the place of the old altar was a new one, made like an altar of God, and on it burned a great fire made of the wood of the sacred trees. So they asked who had done this thing, and they found that a young man named Gideon had done it. And they laid hold upon Gideon, intending to put him to death because he had destroyed the altar of Baal.

But Gideon said, "I have had a message from the Lord. Yesterday I was threshing wheat, in a secret place among the rocks to hide it from the Midianites. And behold, there was a man, like an angel, sitting under an oak, who

said to me, 'The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.'

"And I said, 'How can the Lord be with me when He has forgotten us all? Oh, my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? The Lord has cast us off and has delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.'

"And the man said to me, 'Go in this thy might, and save Israel from the Midianites.'

"And I answered, 'O Lord, how shall I save Israel? My family is the poorest in my tribe, and I am the least in my family.'

"But he said again, 'Go and save Israel. I will be with thee.'

"And even then I could not believe that the Lord had chosen me. I hardly knew whether I was awake or dreaming. And I said, 'Wait here,' and I ran and fetched meat and bread in a basket and broth in a pot, and gave them to the man to eat, and he told me to put them on the rock. And so I did, and he put forth the end of the staff which he had in his hand and touched them, and, behold, the rock blazed with fire and the bread and the meat and the broth were consumed, and in the smoke the angel disappeared.

"Then I knew that I had seen a vision from the Lord.

This is why I went last night and pulled down Baal's altar, and built the Lord's altar in the place of it." And Gideon's father said, "Let Baal look out for himself."

So the people of the village, and of the country round about, knew that the Lord had called Gideon, and that he would save them from the Midianites. And they turned away from serving Baal and served God, and waited to see what would happen next.

XIX

THE BATTLE OF THE LAMPS AND PITCHERS

ONE day the word was brought to Gideon that the Midianites were coming. King Zebah and King Zalmunna, and Oreb the Raven and Zeeb the Wolf, with thousands of fierce men on camels, were on the march. On they came across the Jordan, and like locusts they began to spread over the Great Plain.

And Gideon said to himself, "Did I dream about the angel, or was it true? Did he sit beneath the oak, and tell me that God wished me to fight the Midianites? did he strike fire out of the rock and go up in the smoke?" And Gideon said, "I will make sure. To-night I will spread out a fleece of wool and ask God for a sign. If in the morning the fleece is wet with dew while the earth around it is dry, then I will know that the Lord has sent me." So he spread the fleece upon the ground, and when he rose up early the next morning, the ground was dry and the fleece was so wet that he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water.

But still he was not satisfied. "Perhaps," he said, "it only happened so." And he asked for another sign. "To-night let the fleece be dry and all the ground be wet." And in the morning so it was. The ground was wet with dew, but not a drop had fallen on the fleece.

Then Gideon blew a trumpet and called the people together, and sent messengers all about the country to call the fighting men, and there was a great army. But when Gideon came to see the army he did not like the soldiers' looks: it seemed to him that they were frightened. He was afraid that when they saw the Midianites they would run away. And he made a speech. "To-morrow," he said, "there will be a hard battle. The Midianites are many in number and very fierce. Perhaps you would like to go home. If you are afraid, if your knees are trembling, that is the best thing to do. Go straight home to-day." And twenty-two thousand men, with trembling knees and pale faces, drew a long breath of relief and went home as fast as their legs could carry them. And there were left ten thousand.

But Gideon did not like the looks of the ten thousand. Now there was a spring in that place. The water came clear and cold out of Mount Gilboa and became a river. And across the river were the Midianites in their tents as

far as the eye could see. And very early in the morning Gideon brought the ten thousand to the river and the spring and bade them drink; and as they drank he watched them. Most of them threw themselves upon the ground beside the water and put their lips to the stream and drank; and if there had been any Midianites hidden in the bushes they could have shot the drinkers with arrows, for they were off their guard. But three hundred took up water in their hands and drank, with their other hands holding their weapons and their eyes wide open. These three hundred Gideon chose, and sent the others home.

So the three hundred waited with Gideon for the going down of the sun. And when it was dark, and the lights were out in the camp of the Midianites, Gideon took his armor-bearer, and they two went alone, very softly, and crept about among the tents of Midian. The Midianites lay in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude, and their camels were without number, like the sand by the seaside. And as Gideon and his armor-bearer passed a tent, they heard men talking.

One man said, "I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the army of Midian, and came into a tent and struck it so that it fell and was overturned and lay upon the ground."

GIDEON HEARS THE TELLING OF A DREAM

And the other man said, "That means the sword of Gideon, for into his hands has God delivered all of us this night."

Then Gideon knew that the soldiers were afraid, and he went back to his own camp and called his three hundred men together.

And Gideon divided the three hundred into three companies, a hundred in each company; and to every man he gave a trumpet and an empty pitcher and a lamp; but the lamp was what we call a torch, a burning stick. And Gideon said, "Watch me, and do as you see me do. When I blow my trumpet, you all blow yours, and shout with all your might, 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon! The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!'"

So they all crept softly toward the enemy, every man with his lamp and pitcher in his left hand and his trumpet in his right. And the Midianites were fast asleep, for it was almost midnight. And suddenly Gideon gave the signal; he blew a great blast upon his trumpet, then with the trumpet he broke the pitcher, and the torch he waved about his head, shouting, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" And all the others did the same, and there was a great blowing of trumpets and a great crashing of pitchers and a great shining of flaring torches, and a great

sound of shouting. And the Midianites waked up in terrible alarm, and nobody knew what was the matter; and they looked this way and that, and in every direction there were shouting men and flames of fire. And they ran like frightened sheep, some on foot and some on camels, down the valley and over the Jordan, and out of the country; and they never came back again.

That was the end of Zebah and Zalmunna, and of Oreb the Raven and Zeeb the Wolf, and their fierce soldiers with them.

XX

THE MIGRATION OF DAN

THE Children of Israel were divided into thirteen tribes, as the American people before the Revolution were divided into thirteen colonies. For each of the twelve sons of Jacob became the founder of a tribe, except Joseph, who became the founder of two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh. The Promised Land was divided among these thirteen tribes or colonies. But the tribe of Dan was not satisfied. They thought that the land which was given them was not large enough.

So the tribe of Dan sent five men to find another place for them to live in, and away they went into the north to find it; as if, in the early days, the colony of Rhode Island had sent men to find them a new country in the woods of Maine. And on the way, they came to the house of a man named Micah.

Now Micah had stolen some money which belonged to his mother. He had taken eleven hundred pieces of silver. But afterwards he was very sorry for the wrong thing which he had done, and he brought back the silver. And his

mother took some of the silver and had it made into two images, to look like God: though nobody knows how God looks. And they built a little church, which they called the House of God, and in the church they put the images so that they might look at them while they said their prayers. And the neighbors used to come to Micah's church; and Micah's son conducted the service till they could get a regular minister.

One day, there came walking along the road by Micah's house a young man named Jonathan, who was out in the world in search of his fortune. And he stopped to speak to Micah. He told Micah that his name was Jonathan, and that he was a grandson of Moses, and that he was a regular minister.

And Micah said, "Where are you going, Jonathan?"

And Jonathan said, "Oh, I am just wandering around looking for a good place in which to stay."

And Micah said, "Stay here with me, and take the service in my little church, and be a father and a priest to me and my family, and I will give you a salary. Every year you shall have ten pieces of silver and your board and clothes." That satisfied Jonathan, and he became the minister of Micah's church.

Now Jonathan, in his wanderings, had become ac-

quainted with the tribe of Dan, so that the five men who were looking for a new country knew him well. And they came to the house of Micah just at church time, and heard the priest saying the service. And they said one to another, "That is a familiar voice. It sounds like the voice of Jonathan." So they went in and found Jonathan. And they said, "Jonathan, who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? How much wages do you get?" And Jonathan answered all their questions. And the spies said, "Pray for us, that we may have a prosperous journey."

Then on they went, and presently they came to a little town called Laish. It stood beside the sources of the Jordan, and all around was a fair and fertile country. Moreover, the people were so far away from any neighbors that they had no walls, but lived quiet and secure, and never thought of danger. The five spies agreed that this was the very spot for which they were looking. So they went back to the tribe of Dan and said, "We have found the very place. It is a wide and beautiful land, with woods and water, and the people know nothing about war. Come, let us go, and take the place away from them." For this, you remember, was so long ago that people thought that some things were right which we now know to be wrong.

So six hundred bold men of the tribe of Dan took weapons of war in their hands and started on the march for Laish. And as they went, they passed the house of Micah. And the five spies said, "Do you know what is here? This man has images of gods, made of gold and silver. Might they not be useful for us?" So the six hundred stood at Micah's gate, and the five went quietly into Micah's church, and brought the images.

But Jonathan saw them, and he cried out and said, "What are you doing?"

And they said, "Hold your peace, lay your hand upon your mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest. Is it not better to be the minister of a tribe than the minister of one man?"

And Jonathan, when he heard that, was very glad. He let the spies steal Micah's images, and he himself went with them. So they all went upon the way to Laish.

Now when they had gone a good way, they heard a noise of shouting; and they looked back, and who should come running along the road but Micah and his neighbors. And they turned and said to Micah, "What is the matter with you? Why do you follow us and make all this noise?"

And Micah cried, "You have stolen both my priest and

my gods, and away you go. And you say, 'What is the matter with you?'"

And the men of Dan said, "Micah, take our advice: don't talk so loud. Some of us might possibly get mad and hurt you!" So they went their way. And when Micah saw that they were too many for him, he turned and went back to his house. Then the men of Dan took Laish and settled in that country; and they built a church for Micah's images, and Jonathan became their priest.

XXI

THE RIDDLE OF THE LION AND THE BEES

ON the side of a green hill, in the midst of the Promised Land, lived a man named Manoah and his wife. They belonged to the tribe of Dan, but had stayed behind when the six hundred went out to settle in the land of Laish. In the distance, along the edge of the sky, lay the sea; and between the hill and the sea were miles and miles of yellow cornfields, with vineyards here and there, and groves of olive trees. But all of this fair country belonged to the Philistines. And the Philistines and the Children of Israel were enemies; and after the six hundred boldest men of Dan had gone, the Philistines were very bad to those who were left. Indeed, all of the Children of Israel were afraid of them.

Now as Manoah and his wife looked out from their hillside over the Philistine country, they said often one to another, "Oh, that we had a good stout son to defend us against our enemies in our old age!" And one day when Manoah came home from work, his wife said, "What do

you suppose happened to-day? A strange man stopped and spoke to me, and said that we would have a son. I was so frightened that I forgot to ask him whence he came, and he did not tell his name. Indeed, I did n't know whether he was a man or an angel. But he said that our prayer would be answered and that God would send us a son."

The next day, the strange man came by again, and Manoah's wife was in the field, and she saw him and called her husband.

And Manoah said, "Are you the man who spoke to my wife yesterday?" And he said, "I am."

And Manoah said, "Let thy words come to pass. Only tell us how to bring up the child that he may be strong and sturdy."

And the angel answered, "Let neither the mother nor the child taste either grapes or wine, and never let his hair be cut."

Then Manoah brought out bread and meat and laid them on a rock, and there was a fire burning by the rock, and somehow, — whether the flame dazzled their eyes or the smoke was blown in their faces so that they could not see, — when they looked, the man had disappeared.

Then days passed and days passed, and God sent the child, as the man had said, and his hair was so yellow and his face was so bright that they named him Samson; that is, "The Little Sun." He grew up a stout lad, the strongest in the neighborhood. He never tasted either grapes or wine, and every year his hair grew longer and longer, till they braided it in seven big braids hanging down his back. But if the boys with whom he played ever said anything about the length of Samson's hair, they said it when Samson could not hear them; for they were very careful not to make him angry. Nobody could throw so high, or jump so far, or run so fast as Samson.

At last, it became time for Samson to be married, and he fell in love with a Philistine girl who lived in a place called Timnath. And Samson went down one day, with his father and mother, to call upon the father and mother of the girl, and there came out a young lion from a vineyard and roared against Samson. And Samson caught the lion and killed him with his hands. Then, after a while, as the wedding day drew near, Samson and his father and mother went again to Timnath to the marriage. And as they went, they passed the place where Samson had killed the lion, and behold, among the dry bones of the lion there was a swarm of bees; and Samson took some of the

SAMSON KILLS THE LION WITH HIS HANDS

honey and gave it to his father and mother, and they went along the way eating it.

Now it was the custom in those days, at weddings, to tell riddles. And Samson told a riddle. And his riddle was this: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." And the wedding guests tried to guess the riddle: one said this, and another said that, but none was right. The game was that if any of the thirty guests could find out the riddle within seven days, Samson was to give every man a shirt and a suit of clothes; but if they could not guess it, they were to give him thirty shirts and thirty suits of clothes. So the seventh day came, and nobody had guessed the riddle. Now the guests had gone to Samson's wife and said, "If you don't make your husband tell you the answer to the riddle and then tell us, we will burn down your house." So Samson's wife came to him every day, and cried and cried, and said, "You don't love me. If you loved me you would tell me the answer to the riddle." But he said, "I have not told even my father or my mother." At last, however, on the seventh day, she begged so hard that Samson told her: and straight she went and told the wedding guests. So just as the sun was going down on the evening of the seventh day, they came to Samson, boasting and laughing, and they

said, "What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?" Thus they guessed the riddle, and Samson paid the forfeit of thirty shirts and thirty suits of clothes.

XXII

THE SECRET OF STRENGTH

AMSON was not the captain of an army, like Joshua and Barak and Gideon. He fought the Philistines alone. He used to go out by himself, when they were not looking for him, and surprise them. The favorite stories of the Israelites were the adventures of Samson, as the favorite stories of the Greeks were the adventures of Hercules.

One time, they said, he caught three hundred foxes and tied their tails together, and in each knot he put a lighted torch, and away went the foxes with the firebrands into the standing corn, and burned it down.

Another time, the Philistines were after him, and he let his neighbors tie him with ropes and leave him on a rock. And three thousand Philistines were in pursuit, and when they saw him they gave a great shout and rushed upon him; and he burst the ropes, and picked up a dry bone, the jawbone of an ass, and fought the Philistines with it so that they fled like frightened sheep.

Once he was in the town of Gaza, which had stout walls

around it. And they thought that they had him fast. But in the night, he took the great gates of the city, and picked them up, and the posts with them, and carried them off. And when the Philistines awoke in the morning, Samson was gone, and there were the gates away up on the side of a hill.

But at last, after Samson's wife was dead, he fell in love with another Philistine woman, whose name was Delilah. And she was a false friend. For the Philistines said to Delilah, "Come now, get Samson to tell you the secret of his strength, that we may have the mastery of him, and we will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver." And she promised to do it.

So Delilah said, "Tell me, Samson, what is the secret of your strength? What is the way to bind you so that you cannot get loose?"

And Samson answered, "If I were bound with seven new bowstrings I should be as weak as any other man."

And Delilah said, "Oh, Samson, let me try; let me see if I can tie you so that you cannot get free."

And Samson held out his arms, and she tied seven new bowstrings tight about him with hard knots. And the lords of the Philistines were in the next room, waiting.

And Delilah cried, "The Philistines be upon thee,

Samson!" And he started up, and broke the bowstrings as if they were strings which had been scorched in the fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

But the next day, Delilah teased Samson again to tell the secret. "You mocked me, yesterday," she said, "and told me lies. Now, truly, Samson, how may you be bound so that you must stay bound?"

And Samson said, "If I were to be tied with new ropes which have never been used, then I should be as weak as any other man."

So Delilah took new ropes and tied him fast. And the lords of the Philistines were in the next room, waiting.

And Delilah cried, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" And he broke the ropes as if they had been thread.

Again, the next day, she asked him the same question. And Samson said, "If the seven locks of my hair were woven into a web, I could not get away." And Delilah was weaving cloth upon a loom, and while Samson was asleep she wove his long hair into the web and cried again, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" And straight he waked, and stood up, and pulled away the web and the loom together.

Then Delilah said, "How can you say, 'I love you,'

when every day you mock me and lie to me! Tell me true, what is the secret of your mighty strength?"

And Samson told her true. "If they cut off my hair," he said, "then I shall have no strength at all."

And Delilah knew that this time he had told the truth, and she called for the lords of the Philistines. "Come only this once," she said, "and you shall have him." And they came, and brought the silver pieces with them.

And Samson slept, in the heat of the day, with his head upon Delilah's knees. And the men came in softly and cut off the seven locks of his hair. Then Delilah cried, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" And he awoke, and saw the Philistines coming, and he stretched forth his great arms, and they were like the arms of any other man. And the Philistines laid hold upon him, and put out both his eyes.

So the Philistines brought Samson down to Gaza, and bound him with brass fetters, and put him in prison, and made him grind their corn. But his hair began to grow again. And at last, one day, the Philistines made a great feast in the temple of Dagon, their god. And there were crowds and crowds of people, and all the lords of the Philistines; there were people even on the roof. And they brought Samson from the prison that they might look at

him, and laugh at him. And a lad led him by the hand. And by and by Samson said to the lad, "Lead me to a pillar." Now the temple roof rested on two huge pillars, quite near together. And Samson cried to God and said, "O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, only this once, O God, that I may be avenged upon the Philistines for one of my two eyes." And he thrust out his great arms where he stood between the pillars, and pushed them hard with all his might, and they fell, and the roof fell with them upon the Philistines, and upon their lords, and upon Samson. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.

XXIII

THE BRAMBLE AND THE FIRE

BIMELECH was a king's son. His father was the brave Gideon who fought the battle of the Lamps and Pitchers. But he had seventy brothers. So when Gideon died the question at once arose, "Which of all the princes shall be the king?" This question was promptly answered by Abimelech. He went to the men of a town called Shechem, and said, "No nation can have seventy kings. The right number is one. Now make me king, and I will be your friend." And that pleased the men of Shechem. They gave Abimelech seventy pieces of silver, and he hired seventy bad men, and one black night they set out from Shechem, every man with a piece of silver in one pocket and a sharp knife in the other, and when they came back in the early morning all of Abimelech's seventy brothers had been killed but one. One brother, Jotham, the youngest of them all, escaped.

Now the town of Shechem lay amidst the mountains. On one side was a mountain called Ebal, and on the other side was a mountain called Gerizim. And that day, the

men of Shechem heard the voice of some one calling, and here they looked and there they looked to find where the voice came from, and at last on Mount Gerizim they saw a boy. And there was Abimelech's youngest brother, Jotham. And Jotham lifted up his voice and cried to the men of Shechem, and they came out of their houses and stood in the street to hear him.

"Hearken unto me," he said, "ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you. One time the trees resolved to choose a king, and they said to the olive tree, 'Come thou and reign over us.' But the olive tree said unto them, 'Shall I leave my oil which honors God and man, and go to be king over the trees?' Then they said to the fig tree, 'Come thou and reign over us.' But the fig tree said, 'Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit and go to be king over the trees?' Then they said to the vine, 'Come thou and reign over us.' But the vine said, 'Shall I leave my wine which gladdens God and man and go to be king over the trees?' Thus the olive and the fig and the vine refused. Then said all the trees unto the bramble, 'Come thou and reign over us.' And the bramble consented. 'Come,' said the bramble, 'and get under my shadow. But if you play me false, out of me shall fire come till even the cedars of Lebanon are burned.'"

Thus did Jotham speak, and lest anybody should fail to understand his fable, he told the men of Shechem what it meant.

"My brother Abimelech," he said, "is good for nothing. He is like a bramble in the field. And you have made him your king. Now look out for fire." So saying, he climbed down from the rock on which he stood, and disappeared in the woods and ran away.

And by and by the fire came. For after three years there was a quarrel between Abimelech and the men of Shechem. The men of Shechem began to rob the caravans as they went to and fro over the great roads through Abimelech's land. And in the autumn, when the grapes were ripe, and the men of Shechem were all in the vineyards making wine and drinking it, they defied Abimelech. They said that they were not afraid of him. And they had for leader a man named Gaal, who wished to be king in Abimelech's place. "Who is Abimelech?" he said; "why should we serve him? Make me your captain, and I will look after Abimelech." And this they agreed to do. But Zebul, the mayor of the city, sent word and told Abimelech.

And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that were with him, by night, and marched toward Shechem. Now

early in the morning Gaal the rebel and Zebul the mayor stood together in the gate of the city and looked out.

And Gaal said, "See, there are people coming down from the top of the mountains."

But Zebul laughed and said, "Oh, you see the shadows of the passing clouds."

And Gaal spoke again and said, "See! see! there are people coming over Midland Hill, and there are others gathering under the Magician's Tree."

And Zebul said, "Where is your mouth with which you said, 'Who is Abimelech?' These are the people whom you have despised. Go out now and fight."

So Gaal went out and fought, and Abimelech beat him and chased him and all his followers into the town. And the men of Shechem fled into their strong tower. And Abimelech and his men took axes in their hands and went off into the woods; and Abimelech said, "Watch me, and do as you see me do, quickly." And he cut off a big branch of a tree and put it over his shoulder, and all the soldiers did the same. And down they came against the tower of Shechem, like a marching forest, like Birnam Wood on its famous march to Dunsinane. The boughs they piled about the tower and set them on fire, and burned the tower and the men of Shechem with it.

But the next day, when Abimelech tried in the same way to burn the tower of Thebez, suddenly the end came. For a woman on the top of the tower had a piece of a millstone in her hand, and as Abimelech came near she threw the stone with all her might, and it hit him in the head. And that he might die a soldier's death, he called his armor-bearer to come and kill him with his sword. Thus he died. And thus the evil both of the men of Shechem and of Abimelech was punished.

XXIV

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER

ER father was an outlaw, like Robin Hood. For no fault of his he had been driven from his home, and had gone to live in the wild forest. There he had been joined by other men, some bad and some good, who had been driven out like himself or had run away in fear of being punished. And they went on forays, stealing sheep and oxen. And people who had money in their purses were afraid to go by that way, lest Jephthah and his merry men should fall upon them and send them back with empty pockets, and sore heads into the bargain. Though I hope that Jephthah, like Robin Hood, troubled only those who cheated their neighbors or were cruel to the poor. Anyhow, his fame spread through all the land of Gilead, in which he lived, and everybody knew that Jephthah was a bold outlaw, and that he had with him a band of stout companions. In the greenwood, with these wild men, lived a little girl; and she was Jephthah's only child.

The land of Gilead was bounded by three rivers and a

desert. In the north a river ran into the Jordan, and in the south a river ran into the Jordan, and the desert lay along the east. And in the desert was a wild tribe called the men of Ammon. And the men of Ammon sent word to the men of Gilead and said, "The country in which you live belongs to us. That was where our fathers lived. Come now, move out and let us in." And when the men of Gilead heard that, they were sore distressed, for the men of Ammon were mighty men. "Where is a man," they said, "who can be the captain of our army? If he can lead us into battle and gain the victory, he shall be the king of Gilead." And they sent to Jephthah and asked him.

"Come," they said, "and be our captain, that we may fight with the men of Ammon."

But Jephthah said, "Did you not hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? Why are you come to me now when you are in distress?"

And the men of Gilead said, "If you will be our captain so that we may defeat our enemies, you shall be our king."

So Jephthah and his merry men and his little daughter came out of the woods with the messengers of Gilead. And they all stopped at a church beside the road and said their prayers. And there they told God what they had pro-

mised. And Jephthah stood up and made a vow. "O Lord," he said, "if thou shalt without fail deliver the men of Ammon into my hands, then it shall be that whosoever comes first out of my doors to meet me when I return in peace, I will sacrifice to thee." For Jephthah thought that if he made a vow like that, the Lord would be more likely to give him victory. This, you understand, was a long time ago, when people were very ignorant about God. Of this vow, Jephthah's daughter knew nothing.

Thus Jephthah became the captain. And he sent messengers to the king of Ammon and said, "Why are you come to fight me in my own land?" And the king of Ammon answered, "Your land is my land. Your fathers took it from my fathers. Come now, give it up again peaceably." But Jephthah said, "When our fathers came into these parts out of Egypt, your fathers were not living here. They had been driven out by Sihon, king of the Amorites. And our fathers fought with Sihon and beat him in battle and took his land, from one river to the other. It was not your land. And anyhow, all this happened three hundred years ago. The Lord be judge this day between the men of Gilead and the men of Ammon." So they fell to fighting. And the men of Gilead gained a great victory.

And Jephthah came home in triumph to his house, and

all the women came out to meet him, who had stayed behind while the men went to battle. Out they came, singing and dancing and playing on tambourines. And who should be at the head of the procession but Jephthah's little daughter! So she was the first person who came out to meet him when he returned in peace. She was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And when her father saw her he cried with a great cry, and said, "Alas, my daughter! you have dealt me a worse blow than any that was struck this day in battle: you have brought me down to the ground. For I have vowed a vow to God, and I must keep it, and here you come to meet me."

Then Jephthah's daughter understood what the vow was, and that it meant her death. And she said, "My father, you have gained the victory: that is the great thing. Do to me according to what you have promised to the Lord." It was all terribly wrong, though Jephthah did not know it. But his daughter, like Iphigenia in another story, showed herself a martyr and a heroine. For the sake of her country, as she believed, she gave her life.

So they made Jephthah their king, but his happiness was gone. He fought a battle with the men of Ephraim and drove them back over the river, and stationed his soldiers on the bank where they must cross. And when

anybody came running, the soldiers said, "Are you a man of Ephraim?" and if he said "No," they said, "Say 'Shibboleth.'" And if he said "Sibboleth" they knew that he belonged to Ephraim, for the men of Ephraim were not able to say *sh*. But every year the women of Israel spent four days in the mountain weeping and lamenting in remembrance of the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter.

XXV

THE KING'S GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

ALL the great-grandmothers were once as young as we are. So, when this story begins, King David's great-grandmother was just about at the age when girls are graduated from the grammar school. She lived in Moab, in the country of Balaam and Balak, and her name was Ruth. And at that time a new family moved into that neighborhood from the land of Judah, from the town of Bethlehem. The man's name was Elimelech, and his wife's name was Naomi, and they had two sons. And by and by one of the sons married a girl named Orpah, and the other married Ruth. Then ten years passed, and Elimelech and his two sons died, and Naomi and Ruth and Orpah were left alone.

Then Naomi took her two daughters-in-law each by the hand, and with tears in her eyes kissed them, and told them that she was going back to Bethlehem. And at first they both said that they would go with her. But she told them that they would better go home. "I have no more sons," she said, "and no good house for you to live in."

And Orpah went home, crying as she went. But Ruth stayed with Naomi. "Intreat me not," she said, "to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." So they gathered their things together and set out upon their journey. Over they went across the river Jordan, and climbed the hills, and came at last to Bethlehem. And there they arrived at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Now the next morning Ruth said to her mother, "I must help to support myself and you, so that we may not starve. Let me go into the fields and gather the barley which the reapers leave behind them." For they had a good law in that country which said that the farmers must not gather up all of the wheat or the barley or the fruit, but must leave some for the poor. So Ruth went to glean the barley. The field in which she gleaned belonged to a rich farmer whose name was Boaz. And pretty soon out came Boaz to see how the work was getting on, and he noticed Ruth and asked about her. And the head reaper told him who she was. And Boaz was very kind to her.

"My daughter," he said, "stay with my maidens in my field. Nobody shall harm you. Gather as much as you can carry. When you are thirsty, go and drink out of the

men's bucket, and at noon when you are hungry come and eat your lunch with us."

And Ruth said, "How is it that you are so good to me, a stranger?"

And Boaz answered, "I have heard about you, how you have left your own land and your own people to be a good daughter to my old friend Naomi."

So Ruth gleaned all day behind the reapers in the field of Boaz, and when she was thirsty she drank from their bucket, and when it was time for lunch, she dipped her bread in the vinegar with the others, and Boaz himself passed her the parched corn. And Boaz told the reapers to drop some handfuls in her way; so that at night she had more than a bushel of barley to take home.

And Naomi said, "My daughter, where have you gleaned to-day?" And Ruth said, "In the field of Boaz, and he was very kind to me."

"Why," cried Naomi, "he is a near kinsman. Your husband's father was his cousin." So every day, through barley harvest and through wheat harvest, Ruth gleaned from morning till night in the fields of Boaz.

By and by, good Naomi said to herself, "Boaz has no wife, and Ruth has no husband. How pleasant it would be if they should marry!" And so she planned and planned

BOAZ NOTICES RUTH AND ASKS ABOUT HER

how she might bring it to pass. And one day she called Ruth and thus and so she said to her, and Ruth, who thought that everything that Naomi said was right, promised to do as she was told. And that night the wind was blowing and the moon was shining, and Boaz was working late, winnowing barley in the threshing-floor, he and his men, and after supper he lay down on the floor at the end of the heap of barley and went to sleep. And in the middle of the night he waked and turned over to sleep again, and there was Ruth.

And Boaz said, "Who is this?"

And she said, "I am Ruth. My husband's father was your cousin."

And he said, "You have done well, my daughter, to come to me. I will do whatever you wish. Only there is a kinsman nearer than I. We must first see him. Lie down now and sleep." So she lay down and slept, and the next morning, before the day was light, she rose up and went home.

And that day Boaz sat by the city gate, and the kinsman passed. "Ho!" called Boaz, "turn aside and sit down here." And Boaz called ten men to sit beside them. "Now," said Boaz, "Naomi has some land to sell which belonged to our brother Elimelech. Will you buy it?"

"Yes," the kinsman said, "I will."

"But wait!" said Boaz. "Whoever buys the land must take Naomi with it, and Ruth her daughter."

"That is too much for me," said the kinsman, and he took off his shoe to show that he would not buy.

"Then the land is mine," said Boaz. And the next day he married Ruth amidst the rejoicings of all the people of Bethlehem. And by and by there was a little boy named Obed, and he became the father of Jesse, and Jesse became the father of David.

XXVI

"SAMUEL! SAMUEL!"

ONE time, in the hill country, among the mountains of Ephraim, there lived a farmer named Elkanah. He and Hannah his wife were comfortably rich. They had fields of wheat and vineyards of grapes, and flocks and herds, and plenty of hay in the barn; but in one way they were poor, — they had no children. Sometimes Hannah cried because the house was so empty and still, and there were no voices of children in it. Sometimes she was so sad and lonely that she could not eat, and though her husband tried to comfort her, and said, "Hannah, am I not better to you than ten sons?" still she was full of grief. For children are the best gift which God gives to man, and all the cornfields and vineyards and sheep and oxen in the world are not to be compared with them.

One day, Hannah went in to town, to Shiloh; and as she passed the church she stopped and knelt down on the steps and prayed with all her heart that God would give her a son. And Eli, the minister, was sitting on a bench by the church door. Eli was an old man, and his two sons,

Hophni and Phinehas, who had become ministers in his place, were not only bad ministers, but bad men, so that many people had stopped going to church. In those days, when people went to church, they carried sheep with them, or other animals, to offer to God. This they did that they might show God that they truly loved Him: they gave Him the best they had. But when they came with their sacrifices, and the meat was in the pot cooking over the church fire, Hophni and Phinehas would send their servants, each with a great three-pronged fork in his hand, and they would thrust their forks into the pot, and whatever they brought up they would carry away to their masters. "Give us meat," they said, "for the priests." And if anybody objected, the servants answered, "If you will not give it, we will take it from you by force." Thus Hophni and Phinehas had plenty to eat, and grew rich, and became more wicked day by day, but the number of persons who came to church grew less and less. So when Eli saw Hannah praying at the church steps he was surprised. Nobody had been to church to pray for a long time. He could not believe, at first, that she was really praying; her lips moved, but she made no sound. And because he was old and his eyes were bad so that he could not see well, he thought that she was some drunken person.

THE LAD SHALL BELONG TO THE LORD

"Come, come," he said at last, "how long wilt thou be drunken?" But she said, "Sir, I am not drunken. I am praying my prayers." And she told him what she was praying for. And Eli said, "My daughter, go in peace. May the God of Israel grant thy request."

And the God of Israel did grant her request. God sent a little son to Hannah and Elkanah, and they named him Samuel. And when the child was two years old, they went one day to the church in Shiloh, and there was Eli sitting by the door. And they said, "Sir, do you remember the woman who was here praying for a son? Here she is, and here is her son with her. And we have promised that the lad shall belong to the Lord. Take him now and bring him up to be a minister of the church." And they went away, leaving the child behind them. And Eli took care of the little boy, and because his own sons had turned out so badly, he took the greater pains with Samuel, and taught him to be obedient and honest and to tell the truth. And every year his mother came to see him and brought him a little coat which she had made with her own hands.

At last, one night when Eli was so old that he could hardly see, and Samuel had grown to be a sturdy lad, they were both asleep in the same room. There was a great box in the room called the Ark, and in it were the two

tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written, and over it hung a lamp which was kept burning every night.

And Samuel heard a voice calling his name, "Samuel!" and he answered, "Here am I," and ran to see what Eli wanted. But Eli said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again."

So Samuel went and lay down, and again there was a voice, "Samuel! Samuel!" And again Samuel ran to Eli, saying, "Here am I," and Eli said, "I did not call." And this happened a third time.

Then Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go lie down, and if you hear the voice again, say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.'" And pretty soon he heard the voice again, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

Then the Lord spoke and said, "Behold, I will do a thing in Israel at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. I will punish Eli and his sons for all the evil that is done, for they have behaved themselves wickedly and he did not stop them." Then there was silence, and by and by the lamp burned out, and the sun rose and it was light, and Samuel got up and opened the

doors and let the morning breeze blow in. And Eli said, "Samuel, what did the Lord say?" And Samuel did not like to tell, but Eli urged him, and he told. And Eli said, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."

XXVII

THE BATTLE OF THE ARK OF GOD

ELL, things went on from bad to worse. One day a stranger came to Eli and stood before him as he sat on the bench by the church door. And the stranger said, "Hear what the Lord God says to you, Eli. I chose your father to be my priest, to minister at my altar, to burn incense before me, and to offer the sacrifices of my people. And now you honor your sons more than you honor me, and they are making themselves rich by stealing the offerings which the people bring. Therefore it shall come to pass that your two sons shall die both of them in one day, and your grandchildren shall be so poor that they shall stand begging at the church steps, saying, 'Give me a little money and a bit of bread, for I am hungry.'" But it was too late. The time to teach people to be good is when they are young, and Eli had let that time go by. He had allowed his sons to do whatever they pleased when they were small boys, and now he could not stop them.

Then the Philistines, the neighbors and old enemies of Israel, began to be troublesome again. The Philistines

lived in the long plain by the sea, and the Israelites lived among the hills, and a river ran from the hills into the plain, making a deep valley. Up this valley climbed the Philistines, till they came to a town of the Israelites called Beth-shemesh. And in a field beside the town was a great rock called Ebenezer. And there they had a battle, the Philistines against the Israelites, and the Israelites ran away. And that night the Israelites held a council and said, "What can we do? for the Philistines are mightier than we." And they said, "Let us go to the church in Shiloh and get the Ark of God. If we have that among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies." For they remembered how when their fathers crossed the Jordan, at the beginning, the Ark was carried at the head of the host; and how it was borne by the priests, with blowing of trumpets, at the siege of Jericho. So they took the Ark out of the Shiloh church, and Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, carried it, one at one end and the other at the other. And when the Ark came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again with the echo of it. "Let God arise," they cried, "and let his enemies be scattered. Let them also that hate Him flee before Him!" For that was the battle cry of Israel.

Now the Philistines in their camp heard the noise of the

shout, and they said, "What is the meaning of the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?" And they sent men to find out, and the men came back and said, "God is come into the camp! The God of Israel who smote the Egyptians with plagues, and who has won the men of Israel so many victories over their enemies, is in the camp. Woe unto us! Such a thing has never happened since the Philistines became a nation. Woe unto us! Who shall deliver us out of the hands of this mighty God?" And they held a council to determine what to do. It was plain that they must make a choice between two things: either they must run away as soon as they could and as fast as they could, or else they must fight harder than they had ever fought. Of these they chose the second, like brave men. They said one to another, "Be strong, O ye Philistines, and quit yourselves like men, that ye be not servants to the Hebrews as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men and fight."

So the battle came on again, and the Philistines fought like heroes, and the Israelites were beaten worse than ever. They ran like sheep when the wolves are after them. And the Ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

Now Eli was almost a hundred years old, and blind.

And that day, while the battle was raging afar off, he sat on his bench by the side of the road, at the church door, and waited for the news. And his heart trembled within him for fear. And by and by a man came running out of the army from the scene of battle. His clothes were torn, and there was dust upon his head; so that all who saw him knew at once that the army of Israel had been defeated. But Eli could not see him. And all who saw cried out with a great cry, "What is it? What has happened?" And the runner told them.

And Eli heard the noise of the crying, and he said, "What is the meaning of the noise of this tumult?" And the man from the battle hastened to Eli and said, "I am he that came out of the army, and I am fled to-day out of the army."

And Eli said, "What is done there, my son?" And the messenger answered, "Israel is fled from before the Philistines; and there has been a great slaughter among the people; and your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; and the Ark of God is taken!"

And it came to pass when the messenger made mention of the Ark of God that Eli fell off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck broke, and he died, for he was an old man and heavy. Thus the word

of the Lord came true which He said to Samuel, that the wickedness of Eli's sons should be punished in such a way that both the ears of all who heard of it should tingle.

XXVIII

FIVE GOLD MICE

THE Philistines had five strong cities, and the strongest of these was Ashdod, which means "the fort." When they had defeated the Israelites at Beth-shemesh, beside the great rock Ebenezer, and had taken away the Ark of God, they made all haste to get to Ashdod. Down they came along the valley and across the plain till they drew near the sea. And they shut the gates of Ashdod behind them. And the Ark of God they carried to the temple of their own god, Dagon. For many people thought in those days that there were as many gods as there were countries, each having its own. Thus they believed that the Lord was the god of the land of Israel, but that Dagon was the god of the land of the Philistines. So in every city they had a temple of Dagon. Samson had pulled down the one which belonged to the city of Gaza, but they had built it up again.

They carried the Ark of God into Dagon's temple at Ashdod, and set it down before Dagon's image. For to this image the Philistines said their prayers, and cried

"O Dagon, hear us!" And they thought that the image could hear them. They left the Ark before the Idol, and shut the temple doors that night, and went home. But the next morning, when the Philistines came to the temple at service time to thank Dagon for giving them victory over the Israelites, behold the image of Dagon had fallen down and lay upon the floor. That seemed very strange. But they set the image up again, and shut the temple doors when the sun went down, and left the Ark and the Idol together as before. And the next morning, when they came in, behold, the image of Dagon lay on the floor again before the Ark, and this time his head and both his hands were broken off.

And not only did this strange thing happen, but the people of Ashdod began to feel sick. The plague broke out among them. And at the same time, the mice began to eat the wheat and the vines. The mice came, nibbling and nibbling till they destroyed all that grew in the fields. And wherever the mice went, the plague went with them. And the people of Ashdod said one to another, "It is on account of the Ark of God." And they took the Ark and sent it to the city of Gath. And at Gath the same thing happened. The mice came and the plague followed them, and everybody was sick. And from this city it was taken

THEY PUT THE ARK UPON A CART, AND THE MICE BESIDE IT

to another and another. And everywhere the mice and the plague appeared.

At last the Ark was brought to Ekron. And there it came to pass that all the city cried out, saying, "They have brought about the Ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people." And that very day the mice came, and the plague. And the men of Ekron sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "Send away the Ark of the God of Israel, and let it go to its own place, that it slay us not and our people." And the lords of the Philistines sent for the priests and the diviners, for all the wisest people of the land, and said, "What shall we do to the Ark of the Lord? how shall we send it to its place?" And the wise men said, "Make a new cart, and take two cows and tie them to the cart, and bring their calves home from them. And take the Ark of God and lay it on the cart, and in a box beside the Ark put five gold mice, one for each of your cities. And see what the kine will do. If they go back home to their calves, then we shall know that this is all an accident, it just happened so; but if they go straight towards the land of Israel, then we shall know that it is the Lord's doing."

So they made a new cart, and five gold mice, and they put the Ark upon the cart and the mice beside it, and they

tied the two cows to the cart and took away their calves, and watched to see what they would do. And, behold, the kine went straight towards the land of Israel, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand nor to the left. Along the valley road they went towards Beth-shemesh, and the lords of the Philistines followed after them. And at Beth-shemesh, men were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley, and they lifted up their eyes and saw the Ark and rejoiced to see it. And the cows came into the field of a man named Joshua, and there stood still. And it was the field in which the battle had been fought when the Ark had been taken. And the cart stopped beside the great stone, Ebenezer. And the men of Beth-shemesh took the Ark and put it on the top of the great stone, and the five gold mice beside it. And they took the cart and split it up and made a fire for a sacrifice, and there upon the fire they offered God the kine for a burnt offering. And then they rejoiced and gave thanks unto the Lord.

XXIX

SAUL AND THE SEER

THE asses had run away. They had found a hole in the fence and had got out into the road, and nobody knew where they were. So Saul's father said, "Saul, the asses are lost. Take one of the men with you and go and find them." And they went in search, Saul and the hired man. And here they looked, and there they looked, down this way and down that, in the woods and in the fields, but they were nowhere to be found. They hunted for them for three days, in vain.

At last, Saul said to the servant, "Come, let us go home. My father will fear that we are lost, as well as the asses. He will be anxious."

But the servant said, "In the next town there lives a seer. He is the wisest man in all the land. He can see through mountains and tell what is on the other side, and he knows what is going to happen to-morrow and next year. Let us go to him. Perhaps he can tell us where the asses are, and which way we ought to take to find them."

"We ought not to go to the seer," said Saul, "without a gift. We ought to take him some sort of present for his trouble. But our hands are as empty as our basket. What can we give him?"

And the servant answered, "I have a little silver money in my purse. That will I give to the man of God to tell us our way."

"Well said," replied Saul; "come let us go." So they went to the next town to find the seer.

The city where the seer lived lay on the side of a hill, and there was a well by the gate, and as Saul and his servant drew near they found young maidens going out, with pitchers on their heads, to fetch water for supper. And they said to the maidens, "Is the seer here?" And they answered them and said, "He is: behold, he is before you. This is the day of a feast on the top of the hill, and of a sacrifice to the Lord. And already the people are waiting for the seer, for they will not sit down to the table until he comes to ask the blessing. He will be coming out of the gate directly. You are just in time to meet him." And as they spoke there came an old man out of the gate, tall and wrapped in a cloak.

And Saul said, "Will you kindly tell me where the seer's house is?"

And the old man said, "I am the seer. I am Samuel, the seer. I have been expecting you. You must dine with me to-day, and spend the night."

And when Saul said that he must go home, because his father would be worried about him and about the asses, Samuel said, "The lost asses have been found. And you are found also; for I perceive that you are he on whom is the desire of all Israel."

And Saul said, "Why do you speak so to me? My tribe is the least of the tribes, and my father's family is the least of the families of my tribe. What do you mean?" But Samuel did not reply, and Saul followed him up to the top of the hill, greatly wondering.

Now there was a house at the top of the hill, and about thirty men who had been invited to dinner were waiting in the parlor. In came Samuel, bringing Saul and his servant, just as they were in their dusty clothes; and Samuel gave them the best seats at the table, Saul on his right and Saul's servant on his left. And Samuel called the cook and said, "Bring me the portion of meat which I told you to set apart for me," and the cook brought in a leg of lamb and set it before Samuel. And Samuel said to Saul, "I knew that you were coming, and when I sent the invitations I had a place and a portion kept for you."

So Saul ate with Samuel, and was more and more astonished.

At last the feast was over, and the guests went down from the top of the hill to their houses in the city, and Saul and his servant went home with Samuel. And as the sun went down, and the cool wind began to blow in the hot streets and the stars came out, Samuel took Saul upstairs to the flat roof, and there they sat and had a long talk together.

And Samuel said, "Saul, I had a dream about you yesterday afternoon. I heard in my dream the voice of God saying, 'To-morrow about this time I will send you a man out of the land of Benjamin, and you are to anoint him king over my people Israel.' And to-day, when I came to the gate and saw you, the Lord said in my heart, 'There is the man of whom I spoke.'"

The next morning they rose as the sun was coming up over the side of the hill. And Samuel went with Saul to show him the right road. And as they came out of the city into the open country, Samuel said, "Bid the servant to pass on before us, but you wait here a while that I may show you what is the will of God." So the servant went on ahead, and they two were alone. And Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it on Saul's head, and kissed him, and

SAMUEL AND SAUL HAVE A LONG TALK TOGETHER

said, "The Lord has anointed you to be the king of Israel." Then Saul and his servant went towards home. And two men met them who said, "Saul, the asses are found, but your father is greatly worried about you. He is sorrowing for you, and saying, 'What shall I do for my son?'"

XXX

THE BATTLE OF THE RIGHT EYES

HEN Saul reached home after his adventure with the seer, he was very silent. Three men had met him by the way, one with three kids, another with three baskets of bread, and the third carrying a skin bottle of wine; and they had stopped and saluted him as some great person, and had given him two loaves. And down from the top of a hill had come a procession of prophets with the music of tambourines and flutes and harps and cymbals, singing and dancing as they came, and Saul had felt moved to join them, so that they who passed by and saw him were astonished, and said, "Is Saul among the prophets?" But of all this he said nothing. When his uncle Abner said, "Where have you been all this time?" he answered, "We went to seek the asses, and when we saw that they were nowhere, we came to Samuel."

"And what did Samuel say?" asked Abner.

"Why, Uncle Abner," said Saul, "he told us plainly that the asses were found." But the words of Samuel concerning the kingdom of Israel, he told him not.

Presently, Samuel called the people of Israel together and said, "You have asked the Lord to give you a king, and the Lord has granted your request. This very day, even as I speak, the king stands among you. Come now, pass before me tribe by tribe." So they passed before him tribe by tribe, and he chose the tribe of Benjamin. And he made the tribe of Benjamin to pass before him family by family, and he chose the family of Kish, Saul's father. And he caused the family of Kish to pass before him man by man, but there was one man missing. Where was Saul? So they sent men to find him, for he had hidden himself. And they found him and brought him out, and there he stood before the people, the tallest and goodliest man in all the country round, head and shoulders above everybody. And Samuel said, "You see him whom the Lord has chosen, that there is none like him among all the people." And they all shouted with a great shout, "God save the king!"

As for Saul, though he was now a king, he went back the next day to his own home and went to work again on the farm as if nothing had happened. Indeed, it seemed for a time as if the people, in spite of their shouting, would not take him for their king. Some of them said, "How shall this man save us?" And they despised him and sent him no presents. But he was silent as before, and attended

to his own business in the field and in the barn, and held his peace.

At last, one day, news came of the Challenge of the Right Eyes. The king was plowing when the messengers arrived, and as he came home in the afternoon, driving the oxen before him, he heard a great commotion among the people. "What is the matter?" he asked. "What ails the people that they weep?" So they told Saul the news.

The men of Ammon, whom Jephthah had fought and chased away, had come back and laid siege to a town in Gilead called Jabesh. They had encamped around it, so that nobody could go out or come in, and the citizens could get no food. So the men of Jabesh said to Nahash the king of the men of Ammon, "We will surrender the city. Only make an agreement of peace with us, and we will be your servants." But Nahash answered, "I will make peace with you on one condition: that I may thrust out all your right eyes." Then the men of Jabesh were in a sad plight, and they said, "Give us seven days to find help. If at the end of the week, there is no one to save us, then we will come out, and you shall take our eyes." Then they sent messengers across the Jordan, and it was their report which made Saul's neighbors cry aloud.

And when Saul heard it, the Spirit of God came upon

him. His anger was kindled into a fierce blaze at the cruel threats of the men of Ammon. Instantly he took a yoke of oxen and killed them and cut them into pieces. And he sent messengers each with a bleeding piece of flesh to all the towns of Israel; and the messengers cried, "Whoever comes not forth after Saul to fight against the men of Ammon, so shall it be done to his oxen." And great fear fell on all the people, and they came out with one consent. And word was sent to the men of Jabesh, "To-morrow by the time the sun is hot, you shall have help."

So the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "To-morrow we will come out to you, and you shall do to us all that is in your heart." But Nahash had no knowledge of the march of Saul. Saul marched his army all that night; and early in the morning he fell upon the Ammonites before they were awake, and attacked them on this side and on that, and beat them, and chased them back into the desert, till no two of them were left together. Then some said, "Where are the enemies of Saul, who would not have him for their king? Let us put them to death." But Saul would not permit it. "There shall not a man be put to death this day," he said. So they crowned Saul over again. "Come," they said, "let us renew the kingdom." And all the people promised to obey King Saul.

XXXI

THE ADVENTURE OF THE GREAT TREMBLING

THE wife of King Saul was named Ahinoam. They had five children, three boys and two girls. And the name of their eldest son was Jonathan. Jonathan was like his father, tall and handsome, and he was as brave as he was modest. It was said that he could run as fast as an eagle could fly.

At that time, most of the men of Israel who could run were running away, in fear of the Philistines. The Philistines had taken possession of the land. The Israelites had neither swords nor spears; and, in order to keep them from making any, the Philistines had banished the blacksmiths. Every time a man wanted to get his axe or his plow sharpened he had to go to the country of the Philistines. There was little use, however, for plows or axes, for the Israelites were afraid to go to work either in the fields or in the woods. They hid themselves in caves and in thickets and among the rocks and on the tops of the mountains and in pits.

Some of them left the country, and went over the Jordan to the land of Gilead. Saul, indeed, had six hundred soldiers, but they followed him trembling.

Now across the central mountains of the land, there was a pass, so that men might go across the country from the Jordan River on the east to the Mediterranean Sea on the west. The valley of Michmash led up from the Jordan on one side and the valley of Ajalon led down to the sea-coast on the other. On the south side of this deep and narrow pass was a place called Geba; there Saul was encamped with his six hundred trembling men. On the north side was a place called Michmash; there the Philistines had so great an army that to count them was like counting the sand of the sea. There was a sharp rock on the north, called Bozez, the Shining; and a sharp rock on the south, called Seneh, the Strong; and the wood lay between them.

Then the young prince, Jonathan, spoke to his armor-bearer and said, "Come and let us go over to the Philistine garrison. It may be that the Lord will bless us, for it matters not to Him whether we be many or few."

And the squire, his armor-bearer, said, "Do what you will; I will go with you."

Now King Saul was sitting under a tree on the other

side of the camp, so that he did not know what Jonathan was doing.

Jonathan said, "We will climb down to the bottom of the pass and show ourselves to the enemy. If they say, 'Stay there, you Israelites, till we come down and get you,' we will stand still in our place. But if they say, 'Come up here, if you dare,' then we will go up. That shall be a sign that the Lord is on our side."

And pretty soon the watchmen of the Philistines saw two men in the wood at the bottom of the pass. And the Philistines said, "See, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they had hid themselves." And they called to Jonathan and his armor-bearer and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something."

And Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Come now, for the day is ours."

And he climbed up the steep face of the pass on his hands and knees, and his squire climbed up after him. And suddenly, when nobody was looking, they fell upon the Philistines, shouting like a hundred men. And there was a panic in the Philistine camp. Nobody knew just what had happened. Some thought that a great army of Israelites, twice the size of theirs, and every soldier as big as a giant, had attacked them. And they began to tremble,

and those who were next beyond them trembled, and even the earth trembled, so that it was a very great trembling. And they ran one against another.

And King Saul came out from under the tree where he had been sitting, and looked across the valley, he and his soldiers, and they said, "What is the matter? What is going on in the Philistine camp? Why do they run?" And Saul said, "See who is gone from us." And it was found that Jonathan and his armor-bearer were missing. So they knew that these were the heroes who had scared the army of the Philistines. At first the men of Israel were uncertain what to do, whether to fight or to pray. Saul sent for the priest, and the priest gathered the people and began to pray that they might know what all this meant and what God would have them do. But while he prayed the noise in the camp of the Philistines went on and increased, and it was plain that the multitude was running like frightened sheep, and beating down one another as they ran. So Saul stopped the priest and called for the captain, and over they all went into the battle. And there were men of Israel in the camp of the Philistines, who had been taken prisoners, and they began to fight against their captors, and all the men who had hidden themselves in caves and pits and among the rocks came out to see what all this

noise and tumult meant, and when they saw that the Philistines ran away, they ran after them. So there was a great defeat. And thus the day went until the sun began to set.

Then Saul took a great stone for an altar, and offered upon it the sacrifice of the people, and gave great thanks to God, and there was praise and rejoicing all that night. But the Philistines never stopped running till they had reached their own cities and had locked the gates behind them.

XXXII

THE BLEATING OF THE SHEEP

IN the midst of the Adventure of the Great Trembling, a strange thing happened.

King Saul, when he sent his soldiers to chase the Philistines, forbade them to taste food till the setting of the sun. And this he did in a very solemn manner, making a vow, like Jephthah. He said that if any man ate anything before the sun went down, that man must be put to death. But as the day went on, the soldiers grew very hungry. At last they came to a wood, where there were honeycombs lying on the ground; but no man put his hand to his mouth, for they remembered the king's vow. Then came Jonathan and saw the honey, and before anybody could stop him he reached out a stick and took some honey on the end of it and put it in his mouth. For he knew nothing of the king's commandment.

Then the sun went down, and after supper Saul said, "Let us go again in pursuit of the enemy." But the priest forbade it. The priest said that there was sin in the camp. They must first find out the sinner and punish him as the

king had vowed. And Saul said, "Come near now, all you chiefs, and let us see where the sin has been this day. For, as the Lord liveth, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But there was not a man among all the people that answered him. Then said the king, "Stand you all on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side, and we will cast lots." And they cast lots, and Saul and Jonathan were taken; and they cast lots between Jonathan and Saul, and Jonathan was taken. And Saul said, "My son, what have you done?" And Jonathan answered, "I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand, and so I must die." And Saul said, "God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan." But up rose all the people, and cried, "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? The hero of the battle, the king's son, shall he die? God forbid: as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground: for he hath wrought with God this day." So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.

Somehow, King Saul was never the same man after that. It seemed as if the dreadful strain and distress of that night had affected his mind. Much of the time he was like himself; but again there were days when he would

speak to nobody, but would sit apart thinking dreadful thoughts.

One day, Samuel came to Saul and said, "I have a message for you from the Lord. He wishes you to go to war with the men of Amalek." Now the Amalekites were the oldest enemies of Israel. They lived down south in the deserts, and had been the first to attack the Israelites when they came out of Egypt. And ever since, they had been like the wild Indians in the days of our forefathers. They would dash up, with bows and arrows, and fire upon the villages of the Israelites and kill the people. "Now," said Samuel, "you must go to war with these savages and destroy them utterly. You must not leave any of them alive, and you must destroy all that they have, that they may be no more a nation."

So Saul marched against the Amalekites, and won a great victory. But he did not as Samuel had told him. He spared Agag, king of the Amalekites, and the best of the sheep and oxen. And back he came, and his victorious army, driving the cattle before them, and bringing Agag as a captive.

That night the word of the Lord came to Samuel, and the Lord said, "Saul has turned back from following me, and has not performed my commandments." And it

grieved Samuel, and he cried unto the Lord all night. And early in the morning Samuel went to meet Saul, and Saul greeted him and said, "Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord." And Samuel said, "What, then, is the meaning of this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" And Saul said, "The people spared the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice them to the Lord." And Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night." And Saul said, "Say on." And Samuel said, "The Lord sent you on a journey, and said 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites.' Why did you not obey?" And Saul said, "I have obeyed the Lord: except that the people brought Agag and the sheep and oxen to sacrifice them to the Lord." And Samuel said, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath rejected thee from being king."

And Saul fell down before Samuel and cried, "Forgive me, and the Lord forgive me; I have sinned." But Samuel turned to go away. And Saul caught hold of Samuel's cloak, and the cloak rent. And Samuel said, "Thus hath

the Lord torn from you the kingdom of Israel this day." And Saul cried, "Do not tell the people: honor me now, I pray thee, in the sight of the people." And to this Samuel consented. He went with Saul, and with his own hands hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord. But from that day he sought another king to set over Israel in the place of Saul.

XXXIII

A SHEPHERD OF BETHLEHEM

THE largest farm in Bethlehem belonged to a man named Jesse. Although he was now advanced in years, he had lived on the farm all of his long life, and his father had lived there before him. Indeed, it was still remembered in the neighborhood how Jesse's grandfather, as he harvested the wheat and barley of his broad acres, had fallen in love with a poor girl named Ruth, who worked among the gleaners, and had married her, to the surprise and delight of the village.

The corn in the little valleys of the hill farm stood so thick that it seemed to laugh and sing as it danced with the wind. Apples grew in the orchard, and grapes in the vineyard. Morning and evening the cows came to be milked, and Jesse's wife made the milk into cheese and butter. Sheep lay along the hillside, and she spun the wool into stout clothes for Jesse and their sons and daughters.

There were eight sons, most of them grown into tall men; and one of the older daughters had three boys, who were sturdy lads, Joab and Asahel and Abishai. About

of an age with these three boys was Jesse's youngest son, whose name was David.

There was a gleam of red in David's hair and a glow of red in David's cheeks, and he was as brave as he was handsome. His part of the farm-work was to tend the sheep. In the wild woods near by were lions and bears, who looked with hungry eyes upon the sheep, and David had to fight them. When he went out to the pasture he carried not only a bag which his mother had filled with things to eat, but a thick stick and a sling. Sometimes he fought the lions and bears with the stick, and sometimes with the sling; and if the boys of Bethlehem could throw as well as the left-handed sons of the Benjamin family near by, David could sling a stone at a hair and hit it. This was an accomplishment which he afterwards found useful.

Most of the time, however, the tending of the sheep was an occupation so easy and peaceful that David found leisure to gaze at the clouds, and at the stars, and to make songs and sing them, to the great satisfaction of the sheep, accompanying himself upon a harp. He had his music lessons, and practiced several hours a day.

One day, while David was out in the hill pasture, there came to the village an old man, driving a cow, and having in his hand a horn of precious oil. When the men of Bethle-

hem saw him they were as frightened as if the cow had been a red lion and the horn had been attached to a unicorn. For the old man was Samuel, the prophet, who, they thought, could call down thunder and lightning out of the clear sky. And they said, "Do you come peaceably?"

And Samuel said, "Peaceably. Come with me, all of you, while I offer a sacrifice to the Lord."

So the men followed Samuel till they came to the village well. But David was minding the sheep. And after the sacrifice, Samuel held his horn of oil high above his head and looked about among the men. At first his eye lighted on Eliab, David's oldest brother; for he looked like a king in the clothes of a farmer. But the Lord spoke in Samuel's soul and said: "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." So it was also with David's other brothers.

Then said Samuel to Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?"

And Jesse answered, "There is one more, the youngest. He is keeping the sheep."

"Send," said Samuel, "and fetch him."

So David came, ruddy and of a beautiful countenance and goodly to look upon. And when Samuel saw him, immediately he poured the horn of precious oil upon him.

Then Samuel went away, leaving the people perplexed and wondering. But David knew in his heart that he had been chosen to be the king of Israel.

Now King Saul was every day growing worse of his disease. Trouble and disappointment and a perplexed conscience and the stress of war were telling terribly upon him. He could not sleep. At times, he was beside himself, and acted like a crazy man. At last, the doctors told him that the best remedy for him was music. "Find a man," they said, "who is a cunning player on the harp; and it shall come to pass that when the evil spirit is upon thee he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well."

And somebody said, "I know a young man in Bethlehem, a son of Jesse, who is cunning in playing. He is a mighty valiant youth, and good, and good-looking."

And the king said, "Tell him that I want him."

And the next day there was great excitement among Jesse's neighbors. There was David at the farm gate, and his father and mother and his brothers and sisters telling him good-by, and the king's messengers in waiting. On one side of David was an ass laden with loaves from his mother's oven; on the other side was a little kid of the goats; and over his shoulders was a skin of wine made from the grapes which grew on the warm side of the hill.

These were gifts for the king. And in his hand was his harp.

Thus the shepherd boy became the minstrel of the king. And when the evil spirit came upon Saul, David took his harp and played with his hand, and the music refreshed Saul, and he was eased of his distress. And the king loved the boy, and he made him his squire, to bear his armor.

XXXIV

DAVID FIGHTS THE GIANT

THUS did David divide his time: part he spent in the court of King Saul, and part in the country on his father's farm.

Then there came a war, and the king went out to battle. Instead of the music of the harp he listened to the music of the drums. But David was needed at home, for his older brothers were in the army, and he kept the sheep.

One day his father said to David, "David, I want you to take these ten loaves of bread and this basket of parched corn to your brothers in the army, and here are ten cheeses for their captain; and bring me word again about your brothers and about the war."

And David made his way down a long valley till by and by he came to a level plain. There was a hill on one side of the plain to the east, and another hill on the other side to the west, and these hills were full of soldiers. On the western hill the Philistines had their camp, and on the eastern hill were the forces of the Israelites; and between them across the plain ran a little brook.

And as David drew near he heard a noise of shouting. The Philistines shouted with a great shout, and the Israelites answered. And then there came a voice, like the voices of ten stout men in one, and called out something which David was too far away to understand. And when he came nearer, there he saw in the middle of the plain, with his back to the Philistines and his face to the army of Israel, a mighty giant. The giant was ten feet high, and all his clothes were made of brass. He had a helmet of brass upon his head, and a breastplate of brass upon his breast, and a target of brass upon his back, and boots of brass upon his feet. In one hand he carried a huge spear, in the other hand a sword. Before him went his squire, bearing his shield.

And this is what the giant said, "Choose you a man for you," he cried, "and let him come to me. If he be able to fight with me and kill me, we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, ye shall be our servants, and serve us." And not a man of all the hosts of Israel dared to go out and fight him.

Then the soul of David was stirred within him. He spoke to the first man whom he met. "Tell me," he said, "what does this mean?"

And the man answered, "Yonder is Goliath, the giant

of Gath. Every day he comes out at this hour and defies our army. King Saul has promised that whosoever shall face him and overcome him shall have a great reward in gold, and the hand of the princess, as well. But nobody is bold enough to try it."

David said, "I will try it."

So the word came to his brother Eliab that David had offered to fight Goliath; and Eliab did not like it. It seemed to him, as it often seems to older brothers, that the boy was still a child. As for King Saul, when they told him, he smiled and shook his head. "You are not able," he said, "to fight with this Philistine, for you are but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."

But David said, "I have fought lions and bears since I was ten years old. I have seized them by the beard and killed them. I can do the same with this Philistine. The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."

Even so, it seemed like the proposal of a lamb to fight a wolf. But what else could be done? At last, the king took David into his own tent, and offered him his armor. But the king was the tallest man in the army, and the shepherd boy was short of stature. Saul's helmet came down over

David's ears, and his coat of mail touched David's heels. He put them off. "I can fight best," he said, "in my own way."

And David took his staff in his hand,— the stout stick with which he kept the sheep, — and he had his sling, and from the bank of the brook he chose him five smooth stones. And thus he went out into the plain between the armies, and faced the giant.

And the giant in all his armor came, and his squire carried his shield before him, and when he looked to see what champion the Israelites had found at last, there was but a boy,— a red-cheeked boy with a staff in one hand and a sling in the other.

The giant was very angry. "Am I a dog," he cried, "that thou comest at me with a stick? I will give thy flesh to the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field, and they shall pick thy bones."

And David answered, "Thou comest to me with sword and spear and shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord God of hosts, whom thou hast defied."

Thus the champions drew together, while the two armies watched in breathless silence. And David ran to meet the giant. And even as he ran, he put his hand into his shepherd's bag, and took out a smooth stone and put

it in his sling and slung it. Up went the sling, out went the stone, down went the giant. Straight as an arrow, the stone struck him in the forehead. And David ran, and with the giant's sword cut off the giant's head.

Then did the Philistines flee, and the men of Israel raised a great shout and chased them.

XXXV

UNDER THE KING'S DISPLEASURE

AFTER David killed the giant, he kept the sheep no longer. He lived at the court with the king, and became a soldier. Saul made him a general of the army, and everybody praised him. When the Philistines came again, David led the men of war to battle, and when they came back in victory the women came out to greet them at the gate of every city as they passed, dancing and playing on instruments of music, and singing, —

> "Saul hath slain his thousands,
> And David his ten thousands."

But that displeased Saul, and in his displeasure his old malady returned. And now his insanity began to take a dangerous form. One day when his madness was upon him, and David was playing on the harp to quiet him, the king said to himself, "I will kill David!" And his spear was in his hand, and as David played he threw it at him. But he missed his aim.

Now the king had promised that whoever killed the giant should have not only a reward in gold, but the hand

DAVID ESCAPES BY THE WINDOW

of the princess. But there were two princesses, Merab and Michal. Saul had intended to give David the hand of Merab, but already Michal had given him her heart. While David was only a shepherd and a minstrel, the young princess, listening to his music, had fallen in love with him. And David, as he played, had played to her.

So the mad king made a plot. "Very well," he said, "you shall have Michal, but first you must bring me as a dowry the heads of a hundred Philistines." For he thought that in the battle, David would be killed. But David went out into the enemy's country, and when he came back he brought two hundred Philistine heads. So he married the princess, amidst great rejoicing.

But hardly had the wedding guests gone home when the king made another plot. He determined to send men to seize his son-in-law and kill him. But Michal heard of it. And that night, as she looked out of her window, the princess saw in the dim light the forms of men moving about among the trees. And she said to her husband, "David, you must save your life this very night; to-morrow will be too late." And she took a stout rope and let it down out of a back window, and when nobody was looking David climbed down and ran away.

Then Michal took a wooden image which stood in a

corner of the best room and carried it to David's bed. She laid a pillow of goat's hair under its head, and tucked in the bedclothes about its chin, and in the dark it looked like David. Pretty soon there came a loud knocking at the street door.

"Who is there?" said Michal.

A man's voice answered, "We are come from the king with a message for David."

"Well," said Michal, "you can't see him to-night; he has gone to bed sick."

So the men went back to Saul, and the delay was long enough to enable David to get out of the city, where the king could not find him.

Then the men returned and knocked again, louder than before.

"Who is there?" said Michal.

And a man's voice answered, "Sick or well, we must see David." And the man and his companions had daggers in their hands.

"Come in, then," said Michal, "and I will take you to his room."

And when they came into David's room and saw David, as they supposed, lying in the bed asleep, they drew their daggers with one accord and stabbed him with all

their might. And the daggers stuck in the wooden image!

Now David had another friend at court beside his wife the princess, and that was his wife's brother, Jonathan. Jonathan loved David as his own soul. Indeed, Jonathan had given David his own royal robe, and his sword and his bow, and had said, "After my father is dead, you shall be king and not I."

So David sent word to Jonathan, and said, "Find out how serious this is. Is it only your father's madness getting worse, or does he really intend to take my life?"

And they made this plan. The next day there was to be a great dinner at the king's house, and David's place would be empty. And Saul would notice the empty place, and Jonathan would listen to hear what he would say, and would let David know.

And Jonathan said, "The day after to-morrow I will go out into the field with my bow, as if I meant to shoot at a mark. And you be hiding. I will shoot five arrows and send the boy to fetch them. If I say, 'Here, boy, the arrows are on this side,' then you may know that all is well. But if I say, 'Go farther, the arrows are beyond you,' then flee for your life. But promise me now, David, that when you come, as you surely will, to be prosperous

and great, you will be good to me and to my children." And David promised.

So at the feast, the place was empty. And Saul said, "Where is David?" and Jonathan said, "He has gone to Bethlehem." And Saul rose up in fierce anger and took his spear and tried to kill his son.

Then the next day, Jonathan went out with his bow and shot five arrows, and as the boy went to pick them up, he called, "Go farther, the arrows are beyond you." And David knew that there was but a step between him and death. And Jonathan sent the boy home and found David, and they both wept bitterly. Then Jonathan returned to his father's house, and David fled as fast as he could go into the wilderness.

XXXVI

THE CAVE OF ADULLAM

HEN David fled for his life from the displeasure of King Saul, he became an outlaw, like Robin Hood.

On the way he stopped at a village called Nob, where the Ark of God was kept. And he asked the priest for bread and a sword. And the priest said, "There is no bread here except that which is on the holy table."

And David said, "Let me have that." So the priest gave him five loaves. And the priest said, "There is no sword here except that with which you cut off the giant's head. It is wrapped up in a cloth."

And David said, "I am on the king's business, and in great haste, and I have no sword. There is none like that; give it to me." So the priest gave him the sword. But a man named Doeg, the king's chief herdsman, saw what was done, and told the king.

Then David went to Bethlehem to his father's farm and told the bad news of the anger of the king. "He has threatened to kill me. Indeed, he has already tried twice to kill

me, once with his own hand. You and mother must go at once to a place of safety. Come, let me take you to our cousins in Moab, the family of my great-grandmother Ruth." So over they went, across the Jordan, and put themselves under the protection of the king of Moab.

As for David, he found a place of refuge in the Cave of Adullam. And there men gathered about him.

The first to come was Abiathar. He had been a priest at Nob, and he told David what had happened. Doeg had gone straight to Saul. "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob," he said, "and the chief priest gave him bread from the holy table and the giant's sword." And Saul sent for the chief priest, and the priest said, "Here am I."

And Saul frowned upon him, and said, "Why have you conspired against me with the son of Jesse, and have given him a sword to slay me?"

And the chief priest answered, "Who is so faithful among all your servants as David, your son-in-law, and honorable in your house? I knew nothing of any trouble between you and him."

Then the king's old madness came upon him, and he called for men to kill not only the chief priest, but all the other priests. And at first, nobody would do it. Not a man

would lift his sword to strike those unarmed, innocent men. Finally, Doeg did it. He fell upon them with such fury that only one escaped. Abiathar escaped, and became one of David's band.

And others came, till there were six hundred men. Some had chosen the outlaw life because they were in distress, some because they were in debt, some because they were discontented and were weary of peace and quiet and desirous of adventures. A wild and hardy life they had, among the hills, under the stars, fighting the Philistines, chasing the Amalekites, defending shepherds from the attacks of brigands, and making rich sheepmasters pay for their protection.

There was Abishai, David's nephew. One day David was fighting the Philistines, and the army of the enemy lay about Bethlehem. And in the midst of the battle, in the dust and heat, David was very thirsty; and he looked across the valley over the heads of the struggling soldiers, and there in the distance were the green trees of his native village. And David said, "Oh, that one would give me drink of the waters of the well of Bethlehem, that is by the gate." And Abishai and two others who stood by and heard these words started straight for Bethlehem. Running and hiding and fighting, they made their way through

the Philistine army, and filled a cup with water and brought it back and gave it to David. And David would not drink it. He said it was too sacred to drink, gained as it was by the peril of men's lives. He poured it solemnly upon the ground. That was Abishai's adventure.

There was Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada. One time, he went down into a pit on a snowy day and single-handed fought a lion and killed him. Another time he was attacked by an Egyptian, eight feet high, whose spear was like a weaver's beam. Benaiah had only a stick in his hand when the Egyptian fell upon him; but he plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear. That is the sort of man Benaiah was.

There was Jonathan, another of David's nephews. He had a fight with a Philistine, on each of whose hands were six fingers, and on each of his feet six toes, and the man was big in proportion. But he was not big enough to vanquish Jonathan.

There were eleven men of God, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and their feet as swift as the wild roes on the mountains. Once in the spring, when the water of the Jordan was in full flood, brimming from bank to bank, they swam across and put to flight, some east and some west, the people who lived on the other side.

David also had his share of danger. Once he ventured into a Philistine city and entered the service of the Philistine king. And the Philistines found out who he was. "This," they said, "is the man who killed our champion the giant." And they proposed to make an end of him. And David pretended to be crazy. He opened his mouth so that his spittle fell down upon his beard; he scrabbled on the doors of the gate; so that the king said, "See, the fellow is mad." Thus he escaped.

In such adventures David and his men of Adullam passed their days.

XXXVII

THE OUTLAW AND THE SHEEPMASTER

HERE lived in the land of Israel, among the southern hills, a man named Nabal, with Abigail his wife. Nabal had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats, and his pastures reached farther than the eye could see; but he had a stingy and sullen temper. Abigail, however, was as generous as she was beautiful.

They were shearing sheep, one day, on Nabal's farm, and there were good things to eat and drink, and the shepherds were all very merry, when suddenly they saw ten men coming up along the dusty road. One was Abishai, and one was Jonathan, and one was Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the other seven were lusty outlaws, and they came with a message from their captain, David. "Peace," they said, "be to thee and to thy house, and unto all thy great possessions. We have protected thy shepherds in the fields, as they will tell thee. We have driven off the Amalekites who came to steal the sheep. Remember us, now, and send a gift to David the son of Jesse."

And Nabal was very angry. "Who," he said, "is David,

and who is the son of Jesse? There be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master. Shall I take my bread and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?"

To this the ten men listened in grim silence, and straightway turned about and went away, and Nabal and his shepherds watched them till they were lost to sight over the top of the hill.

But one of the shepherds ran in and told Abigail. "Mistress Abigail," he cried, "an evil thing has happened. David sent men to salute our master, and he railed on them, and sent them away empty. But, indeed, David and his band were very good to us shepherds. We were not hurt, neither missed we anything, as long as we were in the fields. They were a wall to us, both by night and by day. What shall we do? You know the might of David; he will come and destroy us all. And not one of us dares say a word to Nabal."

Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves of bread, and two skin bottles of wine, and five sheep dressed for roasting, and five baskets of parched corn, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs. These she packed on the backs of asses, and said to

her servants: "Go on with these before me. I will come after you." And without a word to Nabal she hurried to meet David.

Thus they climbed the hill, the servants and the mistress, and there at the bottom was a cloud of flying dust, and under the cloud was David with his men, hastening with all speed to punish Nabal.

And when Abigail saw David she alighted and bowed down to the ground before him. "Let not my lord," she said, "regard my husband, who is a foolish person. See, here is a present, all that you can wish. Do not shed blood without a cause. I know that the Lord will certainly make my lord victorious over all the land, because my lord fights the battles of the Lord and does no evil. And the enemies of my lord shall the Lord sling out as from the middle of a sling. And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have made thee ruler over Israel, thou wilt be glad to remember that thou hast shed no blood without a cause, or in revenge."

And David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me, and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with my own hand. For in very deed, as the Lord

God of Israel liveth, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, surely by the morning light both Nabal and all that belong to him should have perished miserably."

Then David received her gift, and said to her, "Go up in peace to thy house. See, I have harkened to thy voice and have accepted thy person." So Abigail turned about and went one way, and David turned about and went the other way.

Nabal's men were eating and drinking, as Abigail came home, sitting at a feast fit for a king. Nabal was drunken, and merry with the foolish merriment of drink. So she told him nothing, either less or more, until the morning light.

Then she said, "Nabal, yesterday your life was in great danger, and I saved you. David was on his way here with four hundred men, and I met him and turned him back."

And Nabal was so filled with terror that his heart, for the moment, ceased to beat: as if he had been walking in his sleep and had waked to find himself on the very edge of a steep cliff. And his fright and the liquor he had drunk brought on a sudden sickness. He went to bed, and never got up again: and in ten days he was dead.

Now David's wife, the princess Michal, had been taken from him by the king and married to another man. And,

anyhow, it was then the custom for men to have more wives than one. So when the tidings of the death of Nabal came to David, his heart turned toward the brave and beautiful lady who had stopped him on the road. And again a band of messengers from David approached the house which had once been Nabal's, but this time they asked in David's name not for bread and meat, but for the hand of Abigail. And Abigail, remembering the grace and courtesy of the bold outlaw, consented.

XXXVIII

THE ADVENTURE OF THE KING'S SPEAR

HEREVER King Saul went he carried his tall spear. When he sat at the table, he had it close beside him, as his son Jonathan knew by sad experience. He even took it with him when he went to bed, leaning it against the wall beside his pillow as he slept. Of course, then, when he went to capture David he bore his spear over his shoulder. Thus he set out, and three thousand men with him.

Word had come to the king that David was hiding in a certain place. Men came one day from a place called Ziph, and said to Saul, "O king, David has hid himself in the hill of Hachilah. Come quick, and catch him."

For the men of Ziph, like a great many other quiet people, were much afraid of David. Indeed, we may well believe that while lion-killers and giant-slayers are very pleasant persons to meet in the pages of books, a band of five or six hundred of them might be objectionable neighbors. Nabal was not the only sheepmaster who wished that they were all in Jericho, or in some other remote place

on the other side of the river Jordan. So the men of Ziph did their best to get rid of them. "Now is the time," they said, "to capture David. He and his men are hiding in the hill of Hachilah."

So Saul set forth, with his three thousand, and to the hill of Hachilah they came. And being tired after their long march, the first thing that they did was to pitch their camp on the side of the hill. Then they laid them down and went to sleep, for it was dark. Saul had five times as many men as David, so nobody was afraid. They did not take even the common precaution of a guard to keep awake and watch. Saul slept, and his uncle Abner the captain slept, and all the soldiers slept, in the shelter of the rocks and under the thick bushes. And the moon came out and looked upon Saul's camp, and there they lay, all the three thousand, sound asleep, while a single spark of light reflected from the sky shone on the tip of the spear which showed where the king lay beneath.

Then from behind the rocks, high up the hill of Hachilah, who should come softly creeping but David himself. He saw the sleeping camp, and in the midst of it the king's spear stuck in the ground by the king's pillow. And he spoke to Abishai, who was beside him. "Who," he said, "will go down with me to Saul to the camp?"

DAVID WITH THE KING'S SPEAR

And immediately Abishai spoke up and said, "I will go with you."

For Abishai thought that David was the best and bravest of all men, the very pattern of heroism and chivalry.

So down they went, stealing silently along among the sleeping soldiers, like Gideon among the tents of the Midianites. And there lay Saul asleep, with a jug of water on one side of him, and his spear stuck in the ground on the other.

Then whispered Abishai to David, "God hath delivered thine enemy into thy hand this day. Now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee. See, here is his spear,— the spear with which he tried to kill thee,— let me pin him with it to the earth. One blow will be enough."

But David answered, "Do not touch him. It is true that he tried to kill me, and is here in pursuit of me. But he is the Lord's anointed. He is the king of Israel. I will leave him in the Lord's hands. Let the Lord bring him in his own good time to his appointed end, by sickness or by battle. I will not hurt him. Take away his jug of water and his spear, and let us go back."

And this they did. They took away the jug of water and the king's spear, and departed. And no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awakened: they were all asleep.

Then David stood on the top of the hill, and called with a loud voice in the still night, "Abner!" he cried, "Ho, Abner! Answerest thou not, Abner?"

And Abner suddenly wakened at the voice of David, and sat up, and looked about him much confused, and said, "Who calls?"

And David answered from the hill in the light of the moon, "Thou art a valiant man, Abner! Thou art a mighty captain! Thou art a prudent master of the king's body-guard! The king has been in peril of his life, while you slept. There came one even to his side to kill him, and you knew it not. Where is the king's jug of water? Where is the king's spear?"

And Saul awoke and recognized the voice of David. And he said, "Is this thy voice, my son David?"

And David said, "It is my voice, O king. Why dost thou pursue me? What have I done against thee? What evil is in my hand? Thou hast believed lies about me."

Then Saul was deeply moved, and said, "I have done wrong. Return, my son David. I will do thee no more harm, because my life was precious in thy sight this day. I have played the fool and erred exceedingly."

But David answered and said, "Behold, the king's spear. Let one of the young men come over and fetch it. May

the Lord spare me, as I have spared the Lord's anointed."

And Saul replied, "Blessed be thou, my son David. Thou shalt do great things and prevail."

Thus David forbore a second time from taking his revenge upon his enemies. Then David and his six hundred went upon their way, and Saul and his three thousand went back along the road by which they came.

XXXIX

IN THE LAND OF THE ENEMY

IN the midst of David's troubles with the king of Israel he received a present from the king of Gath. The king of Gath gave him a town.

It happened in this way. As weeks grew into months, and David, in spite of Saul's fair words, did not dare to trust his head within reach of Saul's spear, he said to himself at last, "I am afraid that I shall some day perish at the hand of Saul. What shall I do? Whither shall I turn? How can I get beyond his reach? I will go over to the enemy. I will offer my sword, and the swords of my six hundred men, to the Philistines."

And that he did. And Achish, king of Gath, to whom he went, received him. But many of the Philistines were in doubt. They feared that David's coming was but a plot to defeat and destroy them. "Some dark night," they said, "David will rise up and kill us."

Then David said to Achish, "Give me, I pray thee, some small place in the country, where I may dwell." And

Achish gave him the border town of Ziklag, far from the princes of the Philistines. So all the band with their wives and children settled in Ziklag.

Having Ziklag for their headquarters, they went out on forays and fought the Amalekites. They brought away whatever they could lay their hands upon, and no Amalekites remained to tell the tale. And when they came back from these adventures, Achish would say, "Where have ye made a raid to-day?" And David would answer, "We have been in the south country, in the land of Judah." For in those days men did not understand, as we do, how wrong it is to tell a lie. And Achish believed this false report, and said to himself, "David is making war on his own people. He will never dare to desert us now and go back to his own land."

At last, the time came for another war between the Philistines and the Israelites. In all the towns of the Philistines men were busy shaping bows and arrows; the blacksmiths at their flaming forges were sharpening swords and spears; soldiers were drilling on every village green, captains were making plans, and the army was assembling. Achish sent for David. "Now," he said, "we are to make a great march against your old enemy, King Saul, and we shall need your help." That was very hard for David; but

when the march began, there he was with his six hundred, bringing up the rear. What else could he do?

Fortunately for David, the Philistine leaders would not have him. "What do these Hebrews here?" they said. And Achish answered, "They are trusty men. David has been sent into exile by Saul, his master, and has come with us to fight against him." But the princes and the captains were not satisfied. "Make this fellow return," they said; "he will attack us from behind. He will reconcile himself to Saul by bringing him our heads."

So Achish was obliged to dismiss David. "The princes will not have you," he said. "Come now, to-morrow morning by the first light, rise up and get you gone." And when the sun rose on the morrow, David and his men were on their way to Ziklag.

But when they came in sight of Ziklag, their joy was turned to lamentation; for, behold, the whole place was on fire. A cloud of black smoke covered the town, and underneath the smoke were heaps of ashes. Not a living soul remained. The Amalekites had come and destroyed the town, and had carried away the women and children into captivity.

At first, the whole six hundred sat down upon the ground and cried. Then they got up with stones in their hands,

and began to mutter something about throwing them at David's head. But Abiathar, the priest said: "The thing to do is to follow the Amalekites. Quick! let us pursue and overtake them!"

So off they started on the run, and never stopped till they came to the bank of the brook Besor. And then two hundred men lay down and declared that they could go no further. But the others pushed still forward over the brook.

By and by, in a field, they found a man who, at first sight, seemed to be dead. But they raised him up, and gave him bread and he did eat, and they made him drink water, and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. And when he had eaten, his spirit came to him again. For he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water three days and three nights.

And David said, "To whom belongest thou? and whence art thou?"

And he said, "I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite, and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. We had been on a raid, and had burned Ziklag."

And David said, "Canst thou bring me down to this company?"

And after David had promised neither to kill him nor to give him up to his master, the man agreed to act as guide.

As the sun was setting, they came in sight of the Amalekites, eating and drinking and dancing like wild Indians, because of the great spoil which they had taken. And David smote them so suddenly and fiercely that they were surprised and overcome. Four hundred of them, young men on swift camels, escaped, but all the spoil remained. There was nothing lacking, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters: David recovered all.

But meanwhile, in the north, along the Great Plain, the army of the Philistines was marching day and night to give battle to the army of King Saul.

XL

THE WITCH OF ENDOR

IN the old days, almost everybody believed in witches. Even wise men thought that there were old women who had made a bargain with the Prince of Evil: the old women had sold their souls, and in return had been given power to see into the future, to hurt their enemies without touching them, and to talk with those who had been long dead.

This strange belief, which is now held only by ignorant or superstitious persons, came from two facts.

It is a fact that the world in which we live is so full of wonders and mysteries that almost anything seems possible. It is also a fact that one of the most mysterious and wonderful things in the world is the human mind: some people, just by using their minds, can speak to others miles away, — that is called telepathy; some people, just by using their minds, can make others do what they wish them to do and see what they wish them to see, — that is called hypnotism. These powers of the mind are still beyond our understanding, but we do not believe that they have any

more connection with the Prince of Evil than wireless telegraphy or the electric light. In the old days, however, men and women who had these powers were called wizards and witches, and it was thought that the best thing to do with them was to put them to death.

Now King Saul had driven the witches and the wizards out of the land. But afterwards it came to pass that he was exceedingly desirous to know what was in store for him in the near future. The Philistines were marching along the Great Plain, and Saul had mustered all his men to meet them, and there was to be a great battle; and Saul was afraid. "Oh," he cried, troubled and perplexed, "if Samuel were here, he would tell me what to do. Oh, for a single word with Samuel!" But Samuel was dead.

At last, Saul said to his servants, "Go, seek me out a witch, that I may go to her and inquire of her." His servants said: "The witches have been driven out, but there is still one remaining, in a hiding place, at Endor." And Saul disguised himself, and took two men with him, and went to Endor. And they came to the witch's house by night.

"Who is there?" said the witch.

"One in distress," said Saul, "who wishes a moment's speech with a departed spirit."

And the witch said, "I cannot help you. The king has banished all the witches. If he were to find me, he would take my life."

But Saul answered, "I am able to protect you. Only do as I ask and there shall no harm befall you."

"Who is it," asked the witch, "with whom you wish to speak?"

And Saul said, "Samuel."

Then the witch began to use her mind. The first thing which her mind told her was that her visitor was no other than the king himself. And this the king confessed. "Be not afraid," he said, "only bring Samuel to speak with me." Then the witch's mind told her what Samuel would say, if he were yet alive. She thought of the Philistine army and of Saul's few soldiers. She thought of the sternness of Samuel, and how he had in his lifetime rebuked the king. It was plain that Samuel, if he could speak, would declare the sure defeat of Saul, and would say that it was a divine punishment upon him.

Now the house was as dark as the black night, except where a dim light showed the witch's face and deepened the surrounding gloom. And suddenly the witch cried with a loud voice, and put her hands before her eyes; and Saul said, "What do you see?" And she said, "I see a god

ascending out of the earth." And Saul said, "What form is he of?" And the woman answered, "An old man cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle."

When Saul heard that, he bowed down with his face to the ground. "What does he say?" said he.

In the darkness of the room, and in the confusion and mystery of the moment, Saul knew not whether the answering voice was that of the witch or of the prophet. But there was a Voice. And the Voice said, "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" And Saul answered, "I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war upon me to destroy me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams: therefore have I called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do."

And the Voice said, "Wherefore dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, therefore he hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand and given it to David. And to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me."

Then Saul fell straightway all along upon the earth, and was sore afraid because of the words of Samuel; and there was no strength in him, because he had eaten nothing all

the day nor all the night. And the witch said, "Let me set a morsel of food before thee, that thou mayest have strength when thou goest on thy way." But Saul said, "I will not eat." At last, however, he got up from the floor and sat upon the bed, and ate, he and his two companions, and went away into the night.

And on the morrow it happened as the Voice had said. The Philistines fought and the men of Israel fled and fell down slain in Mount Gilboa. As for Saul and his sons, the archers hit them with their arrows; so they died, the king and his three sons, that same day together.

The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE . MASSACHUSETTS
U . S . A